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## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

When I was a young girl I would spend time during my summer vacation with my grandparents. Time when you are a pre-teen seems to go slowly and especially in the summer when you didn’t get to see your friends on a regular basis. My grandmother always used to tell me how quickly time went. She would say, “the week just began and here it is finished already.” “Oh how the time flies,” she would tell me. I never understood how time could go so quickly but after this past year serving as your president I can say I understand what Grandma was telling me.

When I reflect on the year, I vividly remember Nancy handing me the president’s gavel and Jeff Hart, then president-elect, talking to us about his plans for his upcoming term. I remember the planning session the CEC held in July to organize for the upcoming program year. I remember each and every luncheon, the December PDC and every event in between. Somehow I lost track of time, because my term is coming to an end.

I am pleased to share that this past year exceeded all of my expectations. The VITA volunteers completed more income tax returns and held more sessions than the previous year. We offered more CPEs through luncheons, audio conferences and PDCs than the previous year. We raised money for various charities to include Special Olympics and the Mid-Ohio Food Bank. Probably the most exciting event from this past year was the chapter’s first ever CGFM Module One preparatory study sessions.

I am proud of the CEC I served with. This group of dedicated members worked diligently behind the scenes to ensure each luncheon, audio conference, social outing, volunteer event, educational opportunity and fundraiser went smoothly. They took to heart the theme I adopted for my year as president: “For the Member”.

I want to thank each officer and CEC member for supporting me this past year and for every member who attended the events and made the year such a success. My year as chapter president is ending, but my involvement with AGA continues; I was elected as Regional Vice President-elect for Ohio and Michigan and I assume this role beginning in July.

Again thanks to everyone for allowing me to serve as your president. It has been an honor.

*- Lori Mikesell*

AGA'S 56<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**PROFESSIONAL  
 DEVELOPMENT  
 CONFERENCE  
 & EXPOSITION**

June 24-27, 2007  
 Nashville, Tennessee



## Seeking Committee Members

### Certification

The newly formed Certification Committee is looking for members.

Contact Shawn McCracken, 693-6525 or Ben Novotny, 693-2227.

## Member News

Here is what's new with the AGA Greater Columbus Membership:

### New CGFM

Congratulations to Barb Bail who passed her last CGFM examination.

### New Member

AGA Greater Columbus would like to welcome Cade Kefentse, sponsored by Brenda Locke.

### Member Transfer

AGA Greater Columbus would like to welcome Elizabeth Layao to the chapter. Elizabeth transferred from DFAS-Pacific.

Do you know of any newsworthy member activities? Let us know!

Email: amy.mobley@dfas.mil

### Education

The Education Committee is in need of a Committee Director. Contact Shawn McCracken, 693-6525 or Ben Novotny, 693-2227.

## Treasurer's Report

By Justin Sponseller, Treasurer

As of March 31, 2007

### Checking

Beginning Balance ....	\$4,360.23
Deposits ....	\$ -
Transfer to Savings ....	\$3,000.00
Ending Balance ....	<u>\$1,360.23</u>

### Savings

Beginning Balance ....	\$5,424.01
Transfer from Checking ....	\$3,000.00
Interest Earned ....	\$ 14.45
Deposits ....	\$ -
Ending Balance ....	<u>\$8,438.46</u>

Total .... \$9,798.69

### Community Service

The Community Service Committee is in need of a few members. Contact Kortney Whiteman, 693-0553 or Beth Winsor, 693-8340.

## Chapter Officers

### PRESIDENT

LORI MIKESELL  
 lori.mikesell@dfas.mil

### PRESIDENT-ELECT

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### CHAPTER HISTORIAN

HENRIANN FRANKLIN, CGFM  
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BETH WINSOR, CDFM  
 beth.winsor@dfas.mil

## AGA Fundraiser

AGA is currently selling Donatos Dough Books for \$5 each. These booklets contain 13 total coupons that are worth over \$30 in savings! Purchasing one of these is a great way to support AGA while enjoying great food from Donatos for a great price!

You can purchase these booklets from either Tara Bruns (5A-231) or Kevin Bruns (7C-033). Hurry and get yours while supplies last!

## Luncheon At a Glance

### Speaker and Topic

Mr. Ron Cox  
"Program Management"

### When and Where

Tuesday, May 15  
11:30 am - 1:00 pm  
94th Aero Squadron  
5030 Sawyer Road

### Menu

Farmhouse Chicken  
Garlic Mashed Potatoes  
Green Beans Almondine  
Fresh Garden Salad  
Rolls & Butter  
Desserts  
Assorted Beverages  
Vegetarian option will be provided upon request.

### Member Price

\$12.00

### Non-Member Price

\$15.00

## CGFM Update

### What is the best way to study for the CGFM Examinations?

The best way to study depends on your knowledge, experience, time and location constraints and individual preferences. Start by reviewing the contents of each CGFM Examination at

[www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/exams/default.aspx](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/exams/default.aspx)

The "How Do I Prepare?" section of AGA website offers a couple of ways to prepare for the CGFM examinations:

[www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare)

Instructor-led courses.

Six days of comprehensive courses in government financial management offered in conjunction with Management Concepts:

[www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare/instructorcourses.aspx](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare/instructorcourses.aspx)

Self-study guides.

The guides used in the instructor-led

courses can also be used for individual self-study:

[www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare/studyguide.aspx](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare/studyguide.aspx)

A list of resource materials.

These resources can help you find information on specific topics:

[www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare/studymaterials.aspx](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare/studymaterials.aspx)

Review each choice to determine what would work best for you. In addition, AGA is once again offering an Intensive Review Course and an opportunity to take CGFM Examinations at its Professional Development Conference in Nashville in June. Visit

[www.agacgfm.org/pdc2007/cgfm\\_exam.htm](http://www.agacgfm.org/pdc2007/cgfm_exam.htm) to learn more.

If you have any questions, call the Office of Professional Certification at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 306.

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## Volunteer Opportunity

National President Jeff Hart, CGFM, is organizing a trip to New Orleans to offer support to victims of Hurricane Katrina as they continue to put their lives back together. The trip is scheduled from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to June 10<sup>th</sup>.

Jeff is seeking AGA members who might wish to lend their time and talent to a variety of possible efforts, including (1) building a house with Habitat for Humanity, (2) acting as an advocate to help residents get insurance or other help that they

need or (3) providing personal financial counseling to residents.

While costs food, lodging, etc to participate in this wonderful charity event will need to be paid by the participants; the Greater Columbus Chapter is going to provide financial support to the extent of \$20/day, \$150 max for two individuals to participate. Those who are interested in participating in this noble cause should contact our Community Service Director Kortney Whiteman at 614-693-0553.

# Chapter Calendar

MAY 2007						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Education: Audio Conference - Ethics	10	11	12
13	14	15 Luncheon: Speaker - Ron Cox	16	17 Communications: Newsletter Submission Deadline	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## But I Digress

Have you ever had one of those days when you get a song stuck in your head? Soon you're doing whatever you can to simply get that tune of your mind. You try singing a different tune to yourself, or getting really involved in your daily activities.

These all work for a short period of time. However, in those quiet moments when you stop to ponder something all of the sudden your mental stereo starts blaring "I want it that way" or "99 Red Balloons" or "Who's your daddy?" These mentally recalled songs are harder to get rid of than hiccups.

Why is it that somehow we can get songs stuck in our heads, but when you need to recall the full name of a person you just can't seem to get the last name? You can describe how they look, but the best you can do for a last name is "it starts with a J, something like Johnson, Jones, etc."

The issue is not that we have memory problems, but that we have different ways of remembering things. Perhaps if we put our rolodex into a catchy tune we'd be better able to recall those names. Of course, for some people the song would be longer than War and Peace, but I digress...

# The Bottom Line

## TSP to assess capacity to handle stock market plunges

By Brittany R. Ballenstedt  
[www.govexec.com](http://www.govexec.com)

Officials overseeing the Thrift Savings Plan should be sure they are prepared to handle an increased volume of transactions in the event of a major market plunge, members of the retirement plan's board said at a meeting Monday.

TSP officials noted that following the stock market drop in late February, about 10 percent of participants with investments in the 401(k)-style plan's International (I) Fund made changes. Though the market recovered quickly, board Chairman Andrew Saul said the plan must be prepared to deal with a major influx of transactions.

"We have to make sure we are building ourselves up structurally for increased volume and increased participants," Saul said. "God forbid that we have a major world event...we really have to plan for this."

Officials noted that the system that processes the transactions normally operates on about three-fifths of its capacity. Should the market fall significantly, the system could be turned on to full capacity, allowing it to handle approximately four to five

times the volume of transactions. Any transactions that exceeded that amount could be delayed.

Saul recommended that TSP officials assess the situation and issue a report, and that the issue be discussed in-depth at next month's board meeting.

Meanwhile, new TSP Executive Director Greg Long said plan assets are now up to \$213 billion and are increasing by \$10 billion per quarter. TSP also has more than 3.7 million participants, Long said.

"We said we'd be a \$400 billion plan in three years, but I think we're going to be a \$400 billion plan in two years," Saul said. "You really have a fund that could grow at least \$50 billion a year."

During the past month, military service members' participation in the plan increased from 24.3 percent to 24.6 percent, Long said. He added that TSP officials will receive data from the Defense Department next month on military service participation during the past year.

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## Upcoming Events

**Audio Conference**  
**Ethical Challenges in Today's Government Environment**  
**9 May 2007, 2:00pm – 3:50pm**

AGA, in conjunction with the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers (NASACT), and the Association of Local Government Auditors (ALGA), is pleased to announce a new and significant audio conference addressing ethical challenges and dilemmas in today's work environment.

This audio conference will explore how the power and scope of today's advancing technology can leverage ethical decisions and other ethical challenges which may impact your career and

organization. Topics that will be discussed include ethical risk taking, working within your organization, handling ethical dilemmas and managing your workplace ethics, as well as provide you with the practical approaches for these workplace situations.

Further, the speakers will cover such areas as right versus wrong, morals, integrity, honesty, fairness, enforcement, reporting unethical behavior, conflicts of interest and what a reasonable person would do under certain circumstances.

To discuss the ethics challenge are two industry experts: Alan Goodman, Master Trainer for the Institute for Global Ethics, and Leon Young, Associate Professor at the University of Maryland University College. Both speakers are renowned

Continued on Next Page

ethics lectures, trainers and discussion leaders for government agencies at all levels, government and private associations and firms.

Please join us for two hours of lively discussion about this important and timely topic. In addition to the speakers' commentary, there will be approximately 20 minutes for Q & A so that the participants can ask the speakers questions and share their own experiences. The audio conference will be held in the DFAS-CO Conference Center in the room C-146 (Kansas City Room). Cost: FREE to members, \$25 for non-members. Two (2) CPE credits will be offered in the Behavioral Ethics field of study.

### **May Luncheon**

**15 May 2007, 11:30am – 1:00pm**

It is our pleasure to welcome Mr. Ron Cox to be our guest speaker at the Greater Columbus AGA Chapter's May luncheon. Mr. Cox, AGA's Senior Vice President for Regional Services (Section 1), will be assisting with the Installation of Officers and Award Ceremony, as well as giving a presentation on "Program Management." The luncheon location and menu can be found on page 3 of this issue.

### **AGA National Professional Development Conference (PDC)**

**Nashville Convention Center – Nashville, TN**

**24-27 June 2007**

Saddle up, dust off your best pair of boots and get ready for PDC 2007!

Join us in Music City, USA for AGA's Professional Development Conference & Exposition – the government financial management education and networking event of the year!

Staying current with changes in government financial management is a huge challenge. Let AGA help.

With dozens of educational sessions, social events and exhibitors available, the PDC is an authoritative source for the knowledge and contact you need to succeed in today's constantly changing environment.

Offering 24 CPE hours, the PDC is a valuable event for all government finance professional, whether you are handling the detail work on the front lines, or managing a team amid difficult political and financial realities.

The PDC offers exceptional training opportunities. Learn about the newest research in the field. Find out about tools and techniques that have advanced the profession. Hear dynamic speakers. Meet the top leaders from federal agencies, state and local governments, the private sector and academia. Take part in small group discussions, explore the issues facing the profession and find some answers.

Session will be organized around the following tracks:

- Accountability & Ethics
- Auditing Tips, Tools & Techniques
- Financial Management Strategies
- Innovative Funding Mechanisms
- Management Challenges & Solutions

The PDC is also about networking. Take advantage of the many receptions and social events that are planned, and enjoy the Grand Ole Opry, Country Music Hall of Fame, historical landmarks, good food and fun that Nashville has to offer. Bring your family and explore the Nashville Zoo, Adventure Science Center and other attractions.

The stage is set for a Grand Ole Opportunity. Don't miss this outstanding educational and networking event!

Please contact Diana Kaufman, 693-0370, or Jim Gillenwater, 693-6907, if with any questions about upcoming events.

# TECHTALK

## Report: Lost IRS laptops put taxpayer data at risk

By Mary Mosquera

*mmm.fcw.com*

Thousands of taxpayers are potentially at risk of identity theft because the Internal Revenue Service has lost or experienced the theft of 490 laptops over the last three years, a government report concludes.

The agency has compiled a list of 387 data breach incidents among the missing computers due to inadequate encryption of taxpayers' personal data and weak password controls, said the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA).

TIGTA determined that at least 24 of those incidents that involved 480 individuals could have been prevented if employees had followed IRS policies and procedures, TIGTA said in a recent report.

The IRS reported the computers went missing from 2003 to 2006, many stolen from vehicles and homes and some from IRS facilities. The devices included flash drives, CDs and DVDs. TIGTA reported similar findings in 2003, but said the IRS did not thoroughly correct the problems.

"As a result, it is likely that sensitive data for a significant number of taxpayers have been unnecessarily exposed to potential identity theft and/or other fraudulent schemes," said Michael Phillips, TIGTA's deputy inspector general for audit.

For its audit, TIGTA tested 100 laptops currently in use and determined that 44 still contained unencrypted sensitive data. Fifteen of the 44 were found to have weak security controls that were easy to bypass and gain access.

"Employees did not follow encryption procedures because they were either unaware of security requirements, did so for their own convenience, or did not know their own personal data were considered sensitive," Phillips said.

TIGTA sought detailed information in June 2006 on data incidents for the previous 12 months. The IRS expanded the data collection because Rep. Tom Davis (R-Va.), then chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, requested information from all agencies on all data breaches since 2003. Davis sought the governmentwide data in the wake of the Department of Veterans Affairs' loss of sensitive data on millions of veterans last year.

Before TIGTA's request for information, employees had reported only 24 percent of the incidents to the IRS' Computer Security Incident Response Center.

The IRS counts 47,000 laptops among its employees. Because taxpayer data can be taken outside of the IRS -- for example for revenue agents to make onsite visits to business taxpayers -- more security controls are needed. Those controls center on physically protecting computers and devices, encrypting taxpayer data on those devices, using software controls to limit access to computers and reporting incidents.

The IRS has said it has no evidence of identity theft as a result of the missing laptops. The agency tightened reporting for data breach incidents in response to guidance from the Office of Management and Budget after the VA data breach. All data incidents must be reported to TIGTA, in addition to the IRS Computer Security Incident Response Center and to front-line managers.

Since TIGTA's audit, IRS has implemented several of the auditor's recommendations and corrective actions, the agency said. Those include deploying full disk encryption and physical cable locks on all laptops used by employees and the capability to encrypt sensitive files and e-mails on their computers, said IRS Chief Information Officer Richard Spires.

# Government News

## Agencies expose 100,000 Social Security numbers on Web

By Michael J. Sniffen  
*www.govexec.com*

The Social Security numbers of up to 150,000 people who received Agriculture Department grants have been posted on a government Web site since 1996, but were taken down last week.

Free credit monitoring is being offered to those affected.

The security breach was only noticed last week and promptly closed, the Agriculture Department and Census Bureau announced Friday.

But a study has begun to see if 32 other federal agencies may have followed the same practice. The Agriculture data that included Social Security numbers were removed from the Web on April 13 and similar data from 32 other agencies were taken down April 17 as a precaution, said Agriculture spokeswoman Terri Teuber.

A review has determined that none of the other 32 agencies had a similar problem, said Sean Kevelighan, spokesman for the Office of Management and Budget.

"There is no evidence that this information has been misused," Teuber added. "However, due to the potential that this information was downloaded prior to being removed, USDA will provide the additional monitoring service."

When the breach was reported to Agriculture on April 13, there were Social Security numbers for 47,000 recipients of grants from the department's Farm Services Agency and from USDA Rural Development on a public Web site maintained by the Census Bureau.

The department said the Social Security numbers of 105,000 to 150,000 individuals had been entered into federal databases open to the public since 1981. But the data has only been posted on the Internet by the Census Bureau since 1996.

The Census Bureau collects the grants made by 33 federal agencies and posts them on the Internet

without analysis. By law, the names of these recipients and how much money they got are public records.

The disclosure comes six months after a congressional report found federal workers at 19 agencies had lost personal information affecting thousands of employees and the public, raising concerns about the government's ability to protect sensitive information.

In all, the House Government Reform Committee reported 788 incidents involving the loss or compromise of sensitive personal information since Jan. 1, 2003. That was in addition to the "hundreds of security and privacy incidents" at the Department of Veterans Affairs, according to a report the committee issued in October.

Teuber said the two Agriculture Department programs involved gave each grant a 15-digit identifying number. Included among those digits was the recipient's 9-digit Social Security number. There was nothing on the Web site that indicated the grant number contained the Social Security number, but the recipient who reported the problem recognized her Social Security number in the grant number, Teuber said.

To avoid revealing information that could increase the vulnerability of this private data, Teuber said Agriculture was not releasing more details, including the Web address, of the government site where this information was disclosed until all potentially compromised recipients have been notified.

The Agriculture Department is sending registered mail notifications to 150,000 recipients identified as having been part of the public database since 1981, but Teuber said some people are likely to be on that list more than once.

At an estimated taxpayer cost of \$4 million, Agriculture is offering each of them free credit monitoring for one year, Teuber said.

# Technically Speaking

Government's biggest spenders are the least transparent, report finds

By Richard W. Walker

[www.fcw.com](http://www.fcw.com)

The federal government's biggest-spending agencies tend to disclose less about how their work benefits the public, according to a new study.

In its eighth annual report on agency transparency and performance, the Mercatus Center at George Mason University gave less than satisfactory scores to agencies that accounted for 87 percent of federal spending in 2006. Agencies representing 13 percent of federal spending 2006 received satisfactory or better scores, down from 15 percent in last year's study.

The top-scoring agency was the Transportation Department, earning 53 out of a possible 60 points, followed by the Labor and Veterans Affairs departments, which tied for second place at 51 points apiece. The State Department ranked third in the study with 50 points.

Some of the government's largest agencies had some of the lowest scores: the Health and Human Services (25 points), Homeland Security (30 points), and Housing and Urban Development departments (30 points).

Overall, 11 agencies improved their scores in 2006 compared with 2005, while 11 turned in lower scores and two were unchanged.

To reach those results, Mercatus researchers analyzed the annual performance reports of the 24 agencies covered by the Chief Financial Officers

Act. The reports are mandated by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, which requires agencies to disclose their financial data and achievements to the public.

To evaluate GPRA reports, researchers used 12 criteria in three broad categories: transparency of reporting, the extent to which public benefits are communicated and leadership in using performance data to improve agency work.

In the report, Mercatus officials made it clear that their purpose was not to judge the quality of the actual results that agencies produced but rather to ascertain how well the agencies' reports convey those results to the public.

"We review the reports solely from this perspective and not as accountants, government insiders or experts on the functions of particular agencies," they said.

Criteria include whether agencies present information clearly and concisely, offer a set of performance metrics that captures public outcomes that a lay reader can understand, and provide assurance that the agency is taking effective steps to resolve management hurdles.

In general, the quality of disclosure in agency reports has improved, Mercatus officials said. "But the improvement has not been as rapid or as widespread as we had hoped," they added.

A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,  
We bid be quiet when we hear it cry;  
But were we burdened with like weight of pain,  
As much or more we should ourselves complain.

~William Shakespeare

USDA funding recipients who wish to take advantage of the credit monitoring offer will receive instructions on how to register. Any USDA funding recipient with questions may call 1-800-FED-INFO (1-800-333-4636) or visit <http://USA.gov>. The call center operates from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EDT, Monday-Friday.

Under supervision of the Office of Management and Budget, the grant numbers posted by the other 32 agencies were taken down and reviewed to see if any included Social Security numbers. "We are sure no other agencies ... were impacted by similar problems," said OMB's Kevelighan. He attributed the quick response to governmentwide safeguards set up after the Veterans Affairs Department problems last year.

Teuber said an unknown number of private Web sites had downloaded and reposted the information,

but she said at least one of them, OMB Watch, had also removed the identifying grant numbers.

The *New York Times* [first reported](#) the disclosure of the personal information Friday. Its story said that Marsha Bergmeier, president of Mohr Family Farms in Fairmount, Ill., had come across the data while conducting a search on [FedSpending.org](http://FedSpending.org), a Web site operated by OMB Watch which provides a searchable database of federal government expenditures.

In a statement issued Friday, OMB Watch said it had temporarily redacted personally identifiable information embedded in USDA records contained in the Federal Assistance Award Data System. The organization said it was willing to redact such information for all agency records in the system "if the government agrees to provide a plan for updating the [records] without personally identifiable information within 30 days."