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# President's Message

I can't believe my presidency is half over. The last six months have gone by so quickly and with so many accomplishments, thanks to the active membership and directors we have leading the chapter. When I announced my theme for the year, For the Member, I knew I wanted our chapter to focus on our members and how we could best advance our collective financial management knowledge. To that end, the Programs and Education committees have exceeded my expectations in identifying subjects and speakers for our monthly luncheons and meetings. The audio conferences have proven beneficial and timely. The Membership and Early Membership committees have worked together to significantly increase our membership and garner interest in being more active in the chapter. The Communications and Community Service committees have been vital in sharing information timely and improving the image of the Greater Columbus chapter in the surrounding area.

Most recently the Community Service committee organized the Accounting for Kids day event at local schools. The feedback from that event has been very favorable. I am extremely pleased with the Ways and Means committee co-chairs. They have had the most challenging job in identifying and getting approval from the Office of General Counsel for the various fund raising events they've identified. I am really pleased with the results of the volunteers who participated in working the concessions at the Columbus Crew MLS game. The proceeds received will enable the chapter to continue to provide the audio conferences free of charge.

Finally I would be remiss if I didn't mention the amazing members we have in the chapter. Without each of you, none of the above would matter since this year is For the Member. Thank you to everyone who makes the chapter the success it is.

A final reminder, there is still time to register and attend the December PDC. I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and was able to spend time with family and friends.

Have a great month,

*Lori*

# The Bottom Line

A younger federal workforce could influence tech choices

By Matthew Weigelt  
www.fcw.com

Federal agencies must weigh the value of adopting innovative technologies with the added expense of securing them, said panelists at Federal Computer Week's Government CIO Summit in San Diego earlier this month.

The panelists discussed the challenges posed by younger workers who want to use low-cost or free services, such as instant messaging applications, on government-owned computers. They said those newer technologies often run afoul of agencies' personal use policies and introduce new information security and privacy vulnerabilities.

Cora Carmody, executive chief information officer at Science Applications International Corp., said young employees often take a technological step backward when they enter the workplace. They are often disappointed when they don't find wireless connectivity, for example.

Instant messaging might be a novelty for some older workers, but younger people see it as an everyday tool for multitasking and increasing their workplace productivity, said David Sullivan, vice president of information technology at Hampton Roads Transit,

a transportation company based in Virginia. Instant messaging has an advantage over conference calls, said Vern Bettencourt, the Army's deputy chief information officer. Unlike conference calls, people can log and save message chats for future reference.

Barry West, the Commerce Department's CIO, said agencies can't ignore new technologies and must learn to use them to their benefit.

The panelists said some federal agencies have created personal use policies for instant messaging, suggesting a growing comfort level with newer technologies.

Adrienne Spahr, co-chairwoman of the Young Government Leaders, an organization of young public-sector workers, said younger employees can help older ones adapt to new technologies.

"Young people are influencing technology to some degree because they have grown up with and use it every day," she said.

For example, Spahr said that at the Government Accountability Office, where she works, employees

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## Chapter Officers

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## Member Interest Survey – There’s Still Time!

Member Interest Surveys were distributed to all members on Wednesday, October 18th. These surveys are being used to assist the leadership team in planning for future events and identifying the members wants and interests as it relates to AGA. We would like to hear from you. Please take time to fill out the survey and return it to Brenda Locke either electronically or in person at 4B-012 no later than December 15th.

## Volunteer for VITA

The Association of Government Accountants, United Way of Central Ohio, and Columbus Public Schools are once again teaming up to offer free tax return preparation services to low income (under \$36,000) and age 55+ tax-payers.

The AGA Greater Columbus Chapter will staff a VITA site at Northland High School for 5 Saturday mornings from 8:00-12:30 beginning with the last Saturday in January, 2007. Site dates will be 1/27, 2/3, 2/10, 2/17, and 2/24.

Please consider volunteering for at least two of the Saturdays.

Send an email to [kortney.whiteman@dfas.mil](mailto:kortney.whiteman@dfas.mil) by Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> if you are interested.

# Government News

## Senate threatens to cut DTS funding

By Josh Rogin  
[www.fcw.com](http://www.fcw.com)

The Defense Department must fix its Defense Travel System or federal funding will be cut off, senators told DOD officials today. The long-embattled system is not working despite costing almost \$500 million in the past eight years, the senators said.

DTS was intended to be DOD’s all-in-one, Web-based travel management solution, but the system has faced repeated criticism over its lack of usability and delays in development.

“I am appalled that the Defense Department has spent half a billion dollars to develop a system that doesn’t work as required, that doesn’t save money as we were led to believe, and that isn’t being used by DOD personnel” said Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, at a hearing today.

Coleman said he plans to introduce legislation to kill the travel portion of the system. “The travel component of DTS is a failure and a waste of taxpayers’ money,” he said.

DTS’ travel-booking feature fails to find the best fares, and the interface is difficult to use, Coleman said. The system’s back end, including accounting, vouchers and connections to other DOD systems, works reasonably well, however, and should be preserved, if possible, he said.

David Chu, undersecretary of Defense for personnel and readiness, told the committee that DOD was not satisfied with the system’s travel functions. DTS is a means to an end, he said, and the goal is to find the best overall solution. The department is exploring all options for fixing DTS, Chu said.

Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) told Chu he would block further funding for DTS if the problems aren’t resolved. “There won’t be any money going to the Pentagon as long as I’m a U.S. senator until this is fixed,” he said.

The subcommittee found that DTS was used for only 17 percent of travel transactions between January and September at the 42 DOD locations it surveyed. At the Pentagon, only 19.8 percent of travel bookings were made through DTS during the same period, according to the subcommittee’s investigation.

The DTS program office also failed to keep records that would allow objective evaluations of DTS’ success, said Acting DOD Inspector General Thomas Gimble. The department could not produce the cost or savings documentation needed to judge the system, he said.

“It is not possible for us to determine whether DTS is the most cost-effective way to meet the department’s travel management needs or even to fully quantify cost savings,” Gimble testified.

# Take the CGFM Examinations before the NLC

*By Katya Silver, Director of Professional Certification, AGA*

AGA is once again offering a great opportunity to take the CGFM Examinations and earn your CGFM before the annual National Leadership Conference (NLC) in Washington D.C. Whether you've been thinking about earning your CGFM or have enrolled but found it difficult to find time to complete the three exams, this is your chance to get it done!

To help you reach that goal, we are offering a two-day Intensive Review Course on Thursday, February 8, and Friday, February 9, 2007 and an opportunity to take CGFM Examinations on February 10-11, 2007. The cost of the course is only \$249 for qualified participants, and it offers 18 CPE hours. Special Bonus: the CGFM Examinations are offered at no cost to course attendees.

This course is designed as a supplement to previous preparation for the CGFM Examinations, so this is a perfect opportunity for those individuals who have already attended GFM training courses or have been preparing by using the CGFM Study Guides. Enrollment is limited and participants must first apply and be accepted into the CGFM Program, so don't delay.

More information and a registration form for this event are available on AGA website - [http://www.agacgfm.org/nlc\\_2007/cgfm\\_exam.htm](http://www.agacgfm.org/nlc_2007/cgfm_exam.htm).

If you have any questions, contact Katya Silver at 703-684-6931 ext. 305 or [ksilver@agacgfm.org](mailto:ksilver@agacgfm.org).

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## Opportunity Knocks

*By Larita Killian, Director, Grants and Special Projects, Otterbein College*

My Mother always said, "When opportunity comes knocking, you should open the door." When the CGFM came knocking, I opened the door and opportunity slipped in.

The fact is that we don't know what we don't know. After years of federal service – a good number of them with DFAS - I thought I knew government finance. Then one day I started studying for the CGFM and discovered the complexity and sophistication of state and local government finance. I learned how various levels of government collaborate to provide vital services, and about the role of auditing and internal controls.

Knowledge is a beautiful thing. What you gain from preparing for the CGFM exam, or any appropriate certification, is inherently marvelous.

Then to the practical concerns. Most of us can

never have too much "employability." The CGFM is a requirement for many positions in and out of government and a selection factor for others. After leaving government I found a job in the non-profit sector. Without a doubt, the CGFM was an important factor in landing a job I treasure, and the skills gained from the CGFM program help me keep it.

Today I'm studying for the CPA exam. (There's studying and then there's passing. Maybe a giant meteorite will strike the earth and I'll never really have to take the test. Oh Leonid, where art thou?) Pass or fail, complete blame for this aspiration can be traced to the CGFM. And to DFAS managers who encouraged certification. And to my Mother.

My remaining career will relate to government and non-profit accountability, and the CGFM helped open the door.

# TECHTALK

## DoD Unveils Next-Generation CAC

By Josh Rogin  
[www.fcw.com](http://www.fcw.com)

Late last month, the Defense Department began issuing a new generation of common access cards (CAC) to its personnel. The new card complies with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 and has added security features, defense officials said.

DOD officials announced the new cards at Pentagon news conference Nov 1.

“This is the next step on a journey the department began some years ago,” said David Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness. “An important element of this is that it builds trust across agencies, because there is the one credential.”

Chu said the new DOD CAC will provide uniform electronic architecture, added identity fraud prevention features, and upgraded security and privacy capabilities. The new card will hold two fingerprints and a digital photograph on its circuit chip. Also, background checks will be verified before cards are issued.

The move came just at the Oct. 27 deadline for all federal agencies to begin issuing uniform, secure identity cards to employees and contractors.

In August 2004, the Bush administration issued HSPD-12, which requires a mandatory,

governmentwide standard for secure and reliable identification.

In the future, DOD plans to combine the new card with its building access card to increase efficiency, Chu said.

But the infrastructure needed to properly utilize the new cards at DOD installations isn't in place yet, said Mary Dixon, director of the Defense Manpower Data Center, which is in charge of the CAC program.

“On the physical side, that's the place where our challenge is and that we will be working very hard over the next several years to try to put that into place,” she said.

The ability to use the card for cryptographic log-ons, logging on to computers, is nearing 85 percent fulfillment, Dixon said. The next step will be enabling DOD Web sites to accept log-ons using the card, which will reduce the need for usernames and passwords, she said.

DOD issued over 11 million copies of its previous CAC over the past six years. Between ten and 20 new cards were issued in the first week of the rollout. The department will issue the new cards to employees when their old cards expire.

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## But I Digress...

Tony Niccoli wrote: “Take care of those who take care of you.”; Dan Zadra said: “Empathy is the master skill”; and Arthur H. R. Fairchild surmised that “the most distinctive mark of a cultured mind is the ability to take another's point of view; to put one's self in another's place. . . To be willing to test a new idea.” As we deal with people during this time of change we need to be mindful that others have concerns that if we were to take their point of view would affect our behavior. We need to dole out a

little more patience in our dealings with our fellow man. And during this time of year which brings out the best (and worst) in people remember to smile a little more, think a little more of others concerns, and maintain our own composure a little better. Have some empathy for those around you. Listen to how you ask for service or supplies. Ask yourself if you like to be treated the same way? If you don't think there's time for improvement, well, New Year's is coming—it would be a great idea for a resolution. But I digress....

# Upcoming Events

## December Regional PDC

December 4-6, 2006

The Greater Columbus and Central Ohio Chapters of the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) is sponsoring its 22nd annual Regional Professional Developmental Conference (PDC) at the Columbus Athenaeum on Monday-Wednesday, December 4-6, 2006.

You will find an excellent conference schedule that offers outstanding keynote speakers, a wide range of break-out sessions and high quality training classes for you to choose from.

Keynote speakers include:

- Archie Griffin, Ohio State University football legend
- John Kasich, former U.S. Representative turned television show host for FOX News Channel
- Dr. Robert L. Boggs, published author and Federal Voice columnist
- Marianne Jennings, Professor of Legal and Ethical Studies at Arizona State University
- Jeff Hart, current AGA National President.

A registration form and other information is available at: [www.coaga.org](http://www.coaga.org).

Cost for the conference varies depending on the number of days in attendance. The conference is centrally funded. Discount pricing is available for AGA members; discounts are also available for early registration. Early registration ends on November 6. The event is open to all federal employees and/or AGA members at DFAS Columbus.

Employees wishing to attend must obtain supervisory approval and submit their completed registration form to their Training Coordinator no later than November 20.

If you should have any questions, please contact either Jim Gillenwater (3-6907) or Melissa Ludovissie (3-0856)

## January Luncheon

January 11, 2006

It is our pleasure to welcome Mr. Jim Fograscher as our guest speaker at the Greater Columbus AGA Chapter's January luncheon. Mr. Fograscher, the principal Facilitator at Effective Meeting Facilitation, will be giving a presentation on "Effective Meetings." The luncheon will be held in the DFAS-CO Conference Center in room C-147 (Buckeye room), but the luncheon menu is still to be determined.

If you have any questions about events, or if you have special dietary needs, please contact Melissa Ludovissie at 693-0856, or Jim Gillenwater at 693-6907.

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## Quote of the Month

Don't ever confuse the two, your life and your work. That's what I have to say. The second is only a part of the first.

~Anna Quindlen, *A Short Guide to a Happy Life*, 2000

# Technically Speaking

## Consultants advise against adding real estate fund to TSP

By Karen Rutzick  
www.govexec.com

A consulting firm delivered a long-awaited report Monday advising Thrift Savings Plan officials not to add a controversial real estate fund to the 401(k)-style retirement savings program for federal employees.

The TSP board last fall commissioned Ennis Knupp & Associates of Chicago to examine the possibility of adding a Real Estate Investment Trust fund to the plan, which hit the \$200 billion mark for investments this month. The board has been under pressure from lawmakers to add such a fund.

More than 200 members of the House co-sponsored a bill this session to add a REIT fund to the plan's five basic options. In a series of contentious hearings and an exchange of letters, the board objected to making the addition without studying it further. Board members said they wanted to add funds for financial reasons, not because of political pressure.

Existing TSP funds do not invest in a single area, such as real estate. Instead, they track stocks and bonds invested in a range of fields.

In a compromise, the board -- which is made up of five presidentially appointed financial advisers -- and its executive director, who runs day-to-day operations, agreed to hire Ennis Knupp to conduct an independent study that would examine all possible fund additions, including those of socially responsible funds and inflation-protected funds, as well as REITs.

Ennis Knupp gave three reasons not to add a REIT fund. First, the REIT sector is too small -- about \$380 billion versus trillions of dollars for the indexes of the current funds. Because the TSP is so large, it would be too big of an investor in the sector and have too much of an effect on the sector's standing, the consultants concluded.

Second, they reported, while REITs have had high returns over the past several years, returns in the

very long term have not been as high. There is a diversification benefit, but it is offset by lower returns and higher risk than the current options.

Finally, only one in six of the TSP's peers offer stand-alone REIT funds, Ennis Knupp reported, and participation rates are low in those.

In July, Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, sent a letter to TSP Executive Director Gary Amelio on the REIT issue. Davis questioned the objectivity of the Ennis Knupp study. A memorandum from the company explaining the study's parameters said investors were well served by current TSP offerings.

"Should not such a conclusion be expressed

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### As of October 31, 2006

#### Checking Account

|                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$ 910.03        |
| Deposits          | \$ 441.00        |
| Disbursements     | \$ 586.73        |
| Ending Balance    | <u>\$ 764.30</u> |

#### Savings Account

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Beginning Balance    | \$ 5,397.37        |
| Transfer to Checking | \$ -               |
| Interest Earned      | \$ 13.00           |
| Deposits             | \$ -               |
| Ending Balance       | <u>\$ 5,410.37</u> |

#### Total Balance

\$ 6,174.67



# AGA's 2006-07 Member-Get-A-Member Campaign

Reach for the Rising Stars and You Could Be a Star in Nashville!

That's right, recruit new members into AGA this program year and you could win a free trip (roundtrip airfare and registration) to AGA's 2007 Professional Development Conference & Exposition in Nashville, Tennessee – June 24-27!

This year we are focusing on recruiting the rising stars – we call them early career and tomorrow's professionals - individuals just starting out in their careers, with less than 3 years of experience. Now is the time to reach out to these 'up and comers' – maybe even think about becoming a mentor!

We invite each AGA member to recruit at least one new member in this year's MGAM. Our goal is to continue the positive net growth in membership that we experienced this past year. And, EVERY member who sponsors new members is eligible for prizes and recognition in the *Reach for the Stars* campaign.

Be sure to have handy an AGA membership application or know the AGA website address ([www.agacgfm.org](http://www.agacgfm.org)). And don't forget to include your name in the 'sponsor' line on the membership application to receive credit!

## Prizes!!

Recruit **1** or more members, receive a *Sponsors Only* lapel pin and get recognized in *Topics* and on the AGA website.

Recruit **2** members and start earning *AGA Dollars*. You'll earn 5 AGA Dollars for each new member that joins. Recruit 2 members, earn 10 AGA Dollars, recruit 4 members, earn 20 AGA Dollars and so on. AGA Dollars are like cash and can be redeemed towards publications, membership dues renewals and national conference registrations.

Recruit **6** members by December 31, 2006 and receive your next year's membership dues renewal **FREE**.

Recruit **10** or more members by March 31, 2007 and get placed into a fishbowl drawing for a **FREE trip** (roundtrip airfare and registration to AGA's 2007 Professional Development Conference in Nashville, Tennessee). Recruit 10 members, get one chance at the drawing, recruit 16 members, get seven chances and so on. The more members recruited, the more chances to win.

## Spotlight on Early Career/Tomorrow's Professionals New Members

A \$500 American Express Gift Cheque will be awarded to the AGA member who recruits the most new Early Career members during the MGAM.

## Sponsor Achievement Awards and Recognition

Recruiter of the Year (1 winner) – The member who recruits the most new members from May 1, 2006 through April 30, 2007 will receive a complimentary AGA national meeting registration.

Top Sponsor (2 winners) – The next two members who recruit the highest amount of new members from May 1, 2006 through April 30, 2007 will each receive a complimentary AGA national meeting registration.

Chapter Overall Growth (6 winning chapters) – Those six chapters achieving the highest overall growth percentage in their chapter size grouping for the membership year will each win a complimentary AGA national meeting registration. Each chapter president and membership chair will also be presented with an achievement plaque.

## How to Participate

Have your recruit join online at the following website: [www.agacgfm.org/membership/join/registration.aspx](http://www.agacgfm.org/membership/join/registration.aspx)

Have your recruit enter *your name and membership number* on the "Sponsor's Name" line when applying online.

Follow up with those individuals that you asked to join.

### Rules/Eligibility

All AGA members in good standing are eligible to participate in the MGAM. The campaign period includes all new members joining AGA from May 1, 2006 through April 30, 2007 – AGA's membership year.

National meeting registration can include the National Leadership Conference, the Professional Development Conference & Exposition, the Internal Control & Fraud Conference and the Performance Management Conference. All federal, state and local laws apply. Void where prohibited.

are beginning to rely more on videoconferencing, teleconferencing and secure meeting software to collaborate with people at different locations. "There are fewer and fewer barriers to working with people in different locations and time zones," she said.

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Newer technologies create a more efficient workplace, but they reduce face-to-face interactions, Spahr said. "For young staff, that can sometimes mean less mentoring and on-the-job training," she said.

Coburn introduced an amendment to the 2007 Defense Authorization bill that would have switched DTS to a fee-per-transaction program, but the amendment was taken out of the bill by the joint House/Senate conference committee.

In its place, the conferees mandated an independent study to determine the possibility of separating the travel and accounting functions of DTS, and to evaluate the program's future. A federally funded research and development center will conduct the study, officials said. Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) said at the hearing that he

would depend on the forthcoming study to inform him about DTS' viability. Levin will become chairman of the subcommittee when the congressional leadership changes hands next year.

The DTS contract began as a fee-per-transaction contract in 1998 but was switched to a cost-plus-profit contract in 2001, shortly after Northrop Grumman acquired the company that was managing DTS. The government has paid out a total of \$474 million for DTS, according to the Government Accountability Office, with \$264 million going to Northrop Grumman.

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following the completion of the study rather than before the analysis even is undertaken?" Davis asked.

A spokesman for the TSP said the board sent Ennis Knupp's report to lawmakers on the oversight committees and their staffs, and only Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio, chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia, asked for a meeting to discuss the results.

With a new Congress taking over in January, the bill would have to be reintroduced.

The National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts has lobbied hard for the addition of a REIT fund to the TSP. Representatives of NAREIT argue that the diversification and high returns make REITs a solid investment for TSP participants.