



THE UNNAMED NEWSLETTER

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OF THE UNNAMED COLUMBUS CHAPTER

October 2004

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Ms. Nancy Zmyslinski, CGFM
Interim Chapter President

As the interim chapter president let me welcome you. I am excited about our new AGA chapter. This is an outstanding opportunity for each of you to take an active role in this new organization. Challenge yourself to take a leadership role in a committee or even an officer position. Commit to attending the monthly meetings/luncheons to learn more about business-related topics that directly impact you and the way you do your job. This is a new organization for many of you and represents an opportunity to expand your professional development as the chapter grows from the roots into a thriving, vital professional organization.

I was thrilled to see so many current and

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THE IMPORTANCE OF CERTIFICATIONS IN A CHANGING WORK ENVIRONMENT

By Ms. Martha J Stearns
Deputy Director, Commercial Pay Services
Defense Finance and Accounting Service

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is continuing its transformation journey as part of the President's Management Agenda and Defense Department transformation initiatives. That strategy calls for financial management improvements, the expansion of e-Government and a more strategic look at the business of human capital. One thing is certain: There will be a continuing emphasis on certifications and licenses within our agency.

As the federal government's workforce changes and adapts to the very competitive human resources market that is a by-product of the business of transforming government, professional certification and licensure could be "the" key component in hiring decisions. For that reason, it is imperative that true professionals continue with their professional education, to broaden their skills. Not only does having a certification speak volumes about the experience and knowledge of an employee and highlight his/her potential, it could lead to "weighted consideration" of an individual's qualifications and perhaps enhance that applicant's chances, thus providing an additional edge in today's job market.

The Association of Government Accountants and the American Society of Military Comptrollers support two of the 15 Defense Department-acknowledged financial management-related certification programs, the Certified Government

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potential members attend the Sept 23 kick off meeting. I am confident with such enthusiasm the chapter will be a huge success. During the kick off session Todd Daughenbaug surprised us by announcing that the Central Ohio AGA Chapter will be extending a start up gift of \$5,000. We are indeed fortunate to be given such a generous gift. This gift affords us the opportunity to start this chapter with a sense of fiscal comfortableness that we never expected.

For those with questions on how will this chapter interface with the Buckeye ASMC chapter, let me assure you we already have a strong relationship with the ASMC chapter and even the Central Ohio AGA chapter. We are not in competition, but in collaboration. All of these professional organizations will band together to collectively increase the professionalism of our workforce. The interim chapter officers and chairs are working to develop joint events with both the Buckeye chapter of ASMC and Central Ohio AGA.

I am also pleased to announce that Mr. Zack Gaddy, the DFAS Director, will be our inaugural luncheon speaker. Mr. Gaddy has graciously accepted our offer to speak to our new organization. The luncheon will be held at the DSCC Officers' Club on Tuesday, October 19 at 11:30 am. I hope to see many, if not all of you, there.

We have an exciting year ahead of us, so get involved and join the excitement.

Nancy

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“There is no chance, no destiny, no fate that can circumvent or hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul.”

Hyrum W. Smith
Vice Chairman Franklin Covey

Financial Manager and Certified Defense Financial Manager, respectively. Both organizations are well represented here in the Columbus area, and each is committed to assisting DFAS in terms of increasing its numbers of certified professionals.

One of the DFAS core values focuses on the agency's commitment to being an employer of choice, providing a professional, progressive work environment. The facts bear that out: In FY 2003, DFAS spent more than \$26 million, or \$1,811 per employee, on training - or nearly 3.8 percent of its total payroll - which is more than double the average U.S. industry training expenditure of \$826 per employee in calendar year 2002.

DFAS has thus been in the forefront of reimbursing its employees pursuing or maintaining those agency-approved and recognized professional certifications, licenses or certificates for their testing and renewal fees. Our agency's Learning and Development Division supports the employees' efforts in this regard, providing guidance and information.

So, what does all this mean? Simply that, in order to be competitive in today's modern federal workforce, each of us needs to focus on the idea of continuing education as a means of setting ourselves apart from our "competition." In the business world of today, just having "years of experience" isn't good enough anymore. The expectations of top management are such that "demonstrated potential" is really the more desirable of the two. Having a certification, along with a predisposition to additional learning and an aggressive Individual Development Plan, could mean the difference between advancing or simply staying put.

The choice is clear. Given that a multi-skilled workforce will be an essential ingredient of an ever-shrinking federal government force structure, the true professional will be that individual who takes the long view and pursues a career path highlighted by certification and a unique depth and breadth of experience previously not seen in the Civil Service system.

AGA ESTABLISHES A NEW CHAPTER IN COLUMBUS

By Ms. Lori Mikesell

DFAS held its AGA kick off session on September 23 at 12:30. The team planning the session hoped maybe 30 people would show up to hear about the lesser known organization. To their surprise over 70 potential and current members attended and left the room at standing room only. The audience was comprised of employees from DFAS, DSCC, and other governmental agencies.

The event was opened by DFAS Senior Site Director and Director, Accounting Services, Defense Agencies Nancy Zmyslinski. She welcomed all the attendees and "challenged them to look at not only what AGA can do for you but more importantly what you can do for AGA."

Martha Stearns, Deputy Director, Commercial Pay Services, then took the stage to encourage employees to look into their own career professional development. Stearns offered that "every employee needs to get a feel for what's out there. Change is occurring in the federal government and AGA is a wonderful way to broaden their background". She went on to say that certifications would only continue to be more important

Central Ohio AGA Chapter President Todd Daughenbaugh addressed the audience and reaffirmed that the current Central Ohio chapter does not have a strong federal presence. He noted there are similarities and differences between federal, state and local perspectives. He hopes our new chapter will reach out to the federal community and create benefits to focus on federal needs, training and networking.

Mr. Daughenbaugh announced Central Ohio has offered a \$100 gift certificate to name the new chapter and that any person joining the new chapter would receive a complimentary membership to the Central Ohio chapter. He stated he hopes the two chapters will stay connected and use each other to benefit the entire population. He then surprised the entire room by announcing that Central Ohio is

providing the new chapter with \$5000.00 as seed money to start the new chapter. This announcement was met with gasps of surprise and appreciation. That is a *real* show of confidence in the new chapter.

National President, Mr. Bobby Derrick, CGFM, spoke of the history of AGA and how it was initially formed in 1950. Today, membership nationwide is over 15,000. He told the group he has chartered a team to look into renaming AGA. The only stipulation he gave the group was to keep the letters AGA. He hopes to change the emphasis from Accountants to Accountability. He wants everyone to know that this organization encompasses more than Accountants and Financial Managers. It's an organization for Human Resources, Technical Support and all government professionals. Derrick said his theme for his year of presidency is Leadership.

Everyone left the kick off session with a sense of great things to come and excitement for the new chapter.

CHAPTER CONTESTS

The Interim Officers of the New AGA Chapter in Columbus Ohio are pleased to announce two contests. They are the "Name the Chapter" Contest and the "Name this Newsletter" Contest.

Contest Details:

Everyone is encouraged to submit professional names for the chapter and professional and perhaps witty names for the newsletter to Kenneth George (Interim Director of Communications) by 1 November 2004. Entries will be reviewed by the Chapter Officers and presented in the November Newsletter for Member voting. In the event two submissions are received for the same name, credit and potentially the prize will go to the first submitter.

Prizes:

Chapter Name Winner - One Year's Paid AGA Individual Membership and a \$25.00 Gift Certificate

Newsletter Name Winner - One Year's Paid AGA Individual Membership

THE BENEFITS OF AGA MEMBERSHIP

By Mr. Kenneth George, CPA

Everyone has heard the old adage "It's not what you know, it's who you know." While I tend to believe that what you know has a great impact on your success in life, I also know that who you know and more importantly who knows you can have an equally significant impact on your success. As Government workers we at times can get so overwhelmed by our daily activities that we do not make or take opportunities to socialize with people in areas/agencies outside of our own.

In the AGA members have the opportunity not only to attend meetings and earn CPEs required to maintain their Professional Certifications, they also get the opportunity to socialize with fellow government workers they might not meet otherwise. If a member desires he or she can also take an active part in the leadership of the Chapter by running for and becoming an Officer in the Chapter. Additionally, AGA allows members to: Keep Up-to-Date on current issues affecting the ever changing Government environment; Maintain an awareness of the latest technologies and financial systems that could impact the government; and Receive professional guidance and earn the highly respected CGFM (Certified Government Financial Manager) designation.

As an example of the benefits of AGA let me tell you the story one of my unofficial mentors, Mr. Louis Ockunzzi, CGFM, shared with me when I asked him about the benefits of AGA membership. Lou was working for the GAO (then General Accounting Office) in Detroit when the news came that the Detroit Office may be closed. Lou shared his disappointment at having to move further away from his hometown of Cleveland with a friend he had met through his activity in the AGA. His friend then explained that the Cleveland Center was looking for quality people for some positions. On this tip Lou applied and was accepted to a position. Mr. Ockunzzi is now Deputy Director for Accounting Operations for DFAS Cleveland and remains an active member of the AGA.

HOUSE VOTES TO ALLOW AGENCIES HIRING, PAY FLEXIBILITY

The House passed legislation Wednesday that would give agencies several new options for hiring and compensating employees.

Top federal personnel officials have long said that federal agencies need more flexibilities to recruit and retain quality employees. The bill provides a number of these authorities, including permission for agencies to pay bonuses of up to 100 percent of annual pay over four years. The measure also requires agencies to focus training programs around their strategic goals, create management succession programs, and provide training to assist managers in dealing with poor performers.

The Senate passed its version of the bill, known as the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act [§.129](#), in April. Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio, introduced the measure. The House gave its assent Wednesday on a voice vote.

The bill allows members of the Senior Executive Service who are hired away from the private sector to receive the same vacation benefits that are afforded to those who rise through the federal ranks. Some other workers hired from private firms also will receive credit for previous work experience when determining vacation time.

The bill also addresses a long-standing complaint of federal employees by providing compensatory time off for workers who must conduct business travel outside of normal working hours.

The bill met with bipartisan approval.

"The federal government's most important asset is our people, and we must be able to recruit, retain and reward them," said House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis, R-Va. "This legislation not only enhances existing statutory authorities, but provides additional flexibilities that will assist in the management of human capital."

Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., the ranking

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Democrat on the Government Reform Committee, said the measure "provides agencies with additional tools to recruit and retain employees. I am pleased that these flexibilities apply government-wide, and are not limited to only some agencies."

The bill must go through a conference committee before it is sent to President Bush.

For More See www.GovExec.com

GASB SEEKS INFORMATION ON INTANGIBLE ASSETS

The GASB is conducting a survey of existing practice for reporting intangible assets. The survey is intended to support the Board's upcoming technical agenda project on the accounting for and reporting of intangible assets.

Intangible assets include a broad range of assets with two common characteristics— they are nonfinancial, and they do not have traditional physical form. Major types of intangible assets include right-of-way easements, development and other easements, software, rights to use tangible capital assets (for example, school building or water treatment plants), rights to access the natural resources of land (including mineral, water, and timber rights), and miscellaneous intangibles including goodwill, patents, and licenses.

Many believe that current authoritative guidance for intangible assets is conflicting and, consequently, that reporting practices vary from government to government. This survey is intended to assist the Board in understanding the pervasiveness of the issue and in deciding which types of intangibles should be addressed in the project.

The survey comprises a series of questions about each of the major types of intangible assets and is now posted to the GASB's website at www.gasb.org. The GASB encourages you to check the website and to respond to the survey. Respondents will have an option to complete the survey online or to print the survey and

submit it by mail. Responses will be due at the end of November.

Read More at www.agacgfm.org

BUT I DIGRESS

Just a couple days ago, I was shocked when I ran into an old college friend of mine. He and I were in the same accounting program and lived in the same apartment complex while we were in school. He finished his degree six months before I did and moved to Portland, Oregon to start work with one of the major accounting firms. When I finished college I began my career as a civil servant.

After a brief period of time with his first job, my friend grew dissatisfied with his quality of life and quality of work and took a job with a smaller regional accounting firm. Again, due to quality of life issues my friend grew restless and eventually took the opportunity to come here to THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY to pursue an MBA. Hopefully this venture will help him find what he is looking for.

While not all government employees are satisfied with their jobs or their pay, a recent survey performed by Sirota Consulting, a human capital issues firm, found that 58% of government employees are happy with their pay versus 44% of private companies' employees. I think a lot of that satisfaction with pay is due to quality of life issues.

When I graduated from college I began working for the government making almost half of what my friend was making in the private sector. Why did I choose to work for the government? Why am I still here if I could make more money elsewhere? Why, because having weighed all of the costs, I determined money was not everything. I wanted to be able to be home at 3:30 during the normal busy season. I wanted to be able to sleep in on Monday after a long weekend. I wanted to be able to juggle my work, family, social, and church responsibilities without feeling guilty for not doing enough in one of them. And thus I am. But I digress.

CGFM INFORMATION

WHY EARN THE CGFM?

The Certified Government Financial Manager

The Mark of Excellence in Federal, State and Local Government.

Since its inception in 1994, the CGFM has become the standard by which government financial management professionals are measured. Its education, experience and ethics requirements have served to elevate the most seasoned financial professionals.

More than 13,000 individuals have received the designation so far. Now it's your turn. Experience the benefits of certification first hand - the CGFM is the mark of excellence in your profession. We look forward to adding your name to our distinguished list of Certified Government Financial Managers.

In a 2001 survey by Robert Half International, a financial management placement firm, 85% of the 1400 CFOs surveyed 'believed that a professional certification...can boost career advancement opportunities.'

Heritage and Needs

Over the past two decades, a number of factors have created a rapidly changing environment for today's government financial managers. Beginning with the New York City financial crisis in the 1970s and 1980s, state and local governments began overhauling their financial management systems. In 1990, the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) act called for reforms that brought the goal of accountability to the forefront.

The value of financial managers against this turbulent backdrop has shot upwards. Those who believe they are on the high end of the profession, or on the "fast track" toward getting there, need a credential that shows they are qualified and have the skills to lead. The Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) does this like no other credential.

The CGFM is the first certification broad enough

to cover the whole field of government financial management - federal, state and local. It deals not with testing a person in a specific area, but with measuring a wide range of knowledge and skills that a professional needs to succeed in the federal government financial environment, or to meet the unique challenges faced by state and local government financial managers.

In today's complex and changing world, a professional certification provides prospective employers with a degree of confidence that candidates are prepared for the real world.'
John Radford, CGFM, State Controller, State of Oregon.

Expertise, Value and Recognition

The foundation of the CGFM is the requirement for Education, Experience and Examination. Building on this foundation is a Code of Ethics and required Continuing Professional Education (CPE).

This designation is already recognized as a professional standard. Since the 2001 federal legislation authorizing federal government agencies to use appropriated funds to pay for expenses to obtain professional credentials, three agencies including the DoD and twelve of its components, have issued formal professional certification policies, with other agencies soon to follow suit. The CGFM designation is listed as one of the funded certifications.

To date, seven states have formally recognized the CGFM - Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, Maine, Tennessee, Virginia and Washington. Also, various counties, including Contra Costa County in California, and cities, including Topeka, KS have also formally recognized the CGFM. Each year more and more federal agencies and state and local governments are realizing the value of the CGFM and are formally embracing the designation.

The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) Board of Regents has also recognized the CGFM. It is accepted as a waiver for part IV of the CIA examination.

Toward the Future

The challenge facing today's government financial managers is to keep up with the changing times. New innovations, new developments and new methods of implementation are creating a new environment in which government financial managers must function.

Increasing knowledge and skills is the key to staying abreast of the latest developments. AGA presents a dynamic program of events and courses every year containing solutions, innovations, and technological breakthroughs that you'll need to retain and enhance your CGFM.

The field of government financial management will be far different tomorrow from what it is today. Having a broad knowledge and a recognized professional designation will be the way to distinguish yourself from the crowd.

There's no time like the present for joining the thousands of other leaders in government financial management who already have discovered the unique value and benefit of the CGFM designation.

Why Certification?

"Certification programs are win-win-win--the certifiers benefit; the certified benefit; and so does any customer, client or employer who relies on the certification. That should explain why, within a decade, every market leader in every global industry will offer certification programs for its key employees." Fortune Magazine, 6.26.00

INTERIM CHAPTER OFFICERS

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CHAPTER CALENDAR

19 October 2004 - October Luncheon
Speaker: Mr. Zack Gaddy - Director Defense
Finance and Accounting Service.
Location: DSCC Officer's Club
Time: 11:30
Cost: \$12.00 - Contact Officers for
Tickets and Menu

November 2004 - November Luncheon
Speaker: Ms. Cindy Cox - President AGA
Indianapolis Chapter

December 2004 - Columbus Area AGA PDC

January 2005 - Chapter Elections

CHAPTER ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN JANUARY

Elections will be held in January 2005 for all Officer and Director Positions. In the November Issue a list of all of the Officers and Directors will be given as well as a description of each position's responsibilities. Those interested in running for a leadership position should contact one of the Interim Officers to self-nominate.

Those interested in being a member of a committee should contact an Interim Officer to volunteer. Please see next month's issue for more information about Elections and Committee participation.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

CAREER ADVICE FROM THE TOP

By Ms. Larita Killian, CGFM

At the recent AGA Career Foundations Conference, young people hoping to work in government financial management were treated to advice from top managers in the field. But the secrets to success, generously shared by these federal executives, can benefit individuals at any stage of their career.

Relmond Van Daniker, Executive Director of AGA, reminded conference goers that "The harder you work, the luckier you get." This was a variation on "Chance favors the prepared mind." He told the audience to "Seek employment security, not job security. Jobs come and go, but there will always be a need for competent, qualified individuals."

This is the best possible time to enter government financial management, per Van Daniker. Government and non-profit organizations spend over 50% of the U.S. gross domestic product. The federal government alone has an immediate need for 300 new auditors. State and local governments and private companies are also strengthening their financial management workforce. He characterized the CPA as a "license to print money."

Several speakers urged attendees to seek certification of their skills as a way to stand out from the crowd. AGA offers the Certified Government Financial Manager or CGFM certification through a rigorous, 3-part testing program. With support from Martha Stearns and Susan Carter, DFAS is helping to develop the study guide for Module I, "The Government Environment."

Marie Caputo, CGFM, a senior manager with Clifton Gunderson LLP, revealed why she chose to pursue the CGFM even though she was already a licensed CPA. When assigned lead a team conducting government audits, she pursued the CGFM to gain credibility with clients. "As an auditor, I may not always be liked, but I should be respected."

In making her choice, Caputo was heeding the advice of William Taylor, CGFM, former CFO of the Inter-American Development Bank and Past President of the Institute of Internal Auditors. Taylor's motto is "Certifications set you apart from the rest. Don't limit yourself to just one."

Sam Mock, CGFM and CFO of the Labor Department, told humorous stories of his early career. "They told me that working hard would get you ahead. But that was a lie. Working hard just gets you more hard work." Mock said "working smart" is what it takes to be successful. He urged listeners to "Find a mentor, be a joiner, but it must be win-win. Ask what you can do for the mentor. If it's not win-win, the relationship will not last."

Mock posed an intriguing question: "If a mentor invests in you, what will they receive in return?" He added that people skills, not technical skills, often make or break a career.

Dr. Linda Combs, CFO of the Transportation Department, surprised many listeners by reporting that the DOT monitors 11% of the GDP. In addition to the nation's highways and railways, the DOT monitors 5,000 airports. Combs' advice is, "It's not what you know or who you know. It's how you go about doing your work."

Evelyn Brown, CGFM and Deputy CFO at the Office of Personnel Management, told of putting her best foot forward when interviewing at OPM. Kay Coles James, Director of OPM, told Brown "I'll cut to the chase. Why should we hire you?" Brown boldly replied, "Because you won't find anyone better."

Brown gave conference goers this ubiquitous advice: "Your attitude determines your altitude." It certainly has worked for her.

Bobby Derrick, CGFM, a DFAS manager and National President of AGA, encouraged the audience to build on the professional acquaintances made at the conference for both career and personal reasons. Quoting Homer, he praised the personal as well as career benefits of networking through AGA: "I am a part of all I have met."