

MINNESOTA GOVERNMENT FINANCE
OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
MnGFOA NEWSLETTER

September 2002

Excellence and Leadership in Government Finance

www.mngfoa.org

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By: Sharon Legg

Here it is, the end of summer. Kids are going back to school, and for some of us, our big kids are going off to college. My, how time flies! Now we can look forward to the annual conference in Alexandria. And I am! It's a great time to spend time with our colleagues, and what a great bunch you are. I love it and hope you do too!

At our last luncheon meeting, we heard Colleen A. Davy, University of Minnesota, talk about VISA cardholder information. For those of us that allow our customers to pay for services by credit card, we need to be aware of certain rules put in place by the credit card companies. VISA is trying to provide acceptable levels of protection for cardholder information in the age of ever- evolving technological, market and regulatory changes. Some of Colleen's simple suggestions related to protecting the information we have. We should only keep what is necessary, be aware who has access to the information and train the people who do have access. VISA has web sites, which help in determining how to secure information. If you are interested in these, give me a call.

The Executive Board has spent some time discussing ways to get the word out about governmental finance. As you know, our organization participates in the Student Accounting Conference, where hundreds of students from several Minnesota colleges visit various booths to learn about specific areas of the accounting profession. The MnGFOA also promotes governmental finance by awarding the scholarship and funding a portion of an annual internship. The Board has been discussing ways to better yet inform students (and professors) about careers in government. We are considering a very short video focusing on the results of government and a brochure talking about governmental finance.

If you were like me, while in college the focus was on working for the Big Eight (Big Five to you younger folks or is it Four?). Professors never, ever talked about careers in governmental accounting. And if you were really like me, you started working for the government by default. I am glad and have not regrets about that, though---public service still makes me feel good. My first real job was working for the City of Richfield. The Finance Director at that time was Tom Moran. Two of his goals that I knew about were to further education in governmental accounting and get women involved. (I was one of only five women at the conference back then.) I think we've accomplished the latter goal. It's harder to measure how well we've accomplished the former, but, based on the quality of people we now have working in the field, I would guess we are doing what Tom wanted.

See you at the conference.

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L SEPTEMBER MEETING NOTICE 7

Due to the Annual MnGFOA Conference, there will be no regular monthly meeting in September. We hope to see every one in Alexandria.

2002 MGFOA DATES

Monthly Meeting Dates:	October 16	November 20	December 11
Conferences/Training:	September 17 September 18-20 October	Pre-conference Seminar State Conference Intermediate Government Accounting	

INTERMEDIATE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING COURSE

The Education committee of the MnGFOA will be conducting two one-day intermediate governmental accounting courses in October. The courses will be structured around the GFOA's *GAAFR Study Guide Outlines & Exercises – using the GASB 34 Model*. The session is designed for mid-level financial officers, accountants, independent auditors, and other persons with basic knowledge of accounting. A registration form and details, including locations, dates and cost will be available on the MnGFOA website in early September and in the October newsletter. Contact Fred Espe at 651-490-4622 with any questions.

INTERNSHIP GRANT AVAILABLE

Applications are now being accepted for the 2003 Internship Grant. Help a student gain some experience and him or her hooked on a government career and gain some assistance for your department at the same time.

The Internship Grant is a 50/50 matching grant up to \$2,000. The grant is awarded by October 31 and may be used any time during 2003. Grant application deadline is September 30. You may select an intern to fill the position or, if requested, the MnGFOA may assist by providing resumes of interested students.

Don't lose out on this opportunity. If you plan to have an intern in your department next year, take a few minutes and complete the very easy application form. The form can be found on MnGFOA's web site www.mngfoa.org. Applications should be mailed, e-mailed (legg@ci.coon-rapids.mn.us) or faxed to Sharon Legg (763)-767-6491 at the City of Coon Rapids. If you need additional information, please call Sharon at (763-767-6433).

CERTIFIED PUBLIC FINANCE OFFICER (CPFO) PROGRAM TEST SITE

The Education Committee of the MnGFOA will sponsor a test site for the fall CPFO exam. This year the exam will be held Friday October 25th in the council chambers at the City of Shoreview. For more information or directions to the City of Shoreview's council chambers call Fred Espe at 651-490-4622. To learn more about the program contact GFOA at 312-977-9700 or log onto their web site at www.gfoa.org.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The July 17th minutes of the Executive Board were approved at the August 21, 2002 meeting. A

summary of the minutes is as follows:

- The Check Registers for May and July in the amounts of \$3,696.63 and \$5,335.26 respectively and the Treasurer's Report as of July 2002 were approved.
- Discussion took place on a newsletter policy, status of MGFOA scholarships, audit committee and on the progress of the College and University Connection Committee.
- It was reported that the Education Committee is planning an Intermediate Level Fund accounting Class to be presented in the Metro area and in greater Minnesota this October.

2002 MNGFOA GOLF OUTING

The MnGFOA Golf outing was again a success this year. It was held August 22, 2002 at the Oak Glen Golf Course in Stillwater. We were lucky again to avoid the rain and it turned out to be another nice day enjoyed by 35 members.

Congratulations to the winning team of **Dave Terwilliger** (RW Baird), **Gayle Bauman** (Maplewood), **Fran Windschitl** (Rice County) and **Aaron Nielson** (MMKR). (Is it just a coincidence that Aaron was also on the winning team in 2001?) They turned in a winning score of 6 under par upsetting the "odds on favorite team" of **Bruce DeJong** (Chanhassen), **Lori Yager** (Hopkins), **Andy Berg** (Abdo, Eick & Meyers) and **Mike Kloos** (Dakota County) who turned in the next best score of 3 under par.

Lori Yager hit close to a 200-yard drive to win the women's longest drive contest AND she also won the closest to the pin for women. **Chris Miller** (Roseville) put his ball within 24 inches of the cup to win the closest to the pin for men and the men's longest drive of over 300 feet was won by **Eddie Obermueller** (HLB Taughtes Redpath). A putt of over 20 feet by **Peggy Gibbs** (Edina) was more than enough to win the longest putt contest.

Mark your calendar for next year!! It is anticipated that the Golf outing will be Thursday, August 14, 2003 at the Chomonix Golf Course in Lino Lakes. This event provides an opportunity to meet other members of the MnGFOA and you do not have to be a good golfer to have fun. Come and join us.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

It's your last chance to register for the 2002 Annual MnGFOA Conference – and it's "**0-2 Good to Miss!**" The conference will be held at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria from September 17 to 20. Check your August newsletter for registration forms or go to the MnGFOA web site at www.mngfoa.org. Conference registration form along with payment should be mailed to Greg Sticha at the address indicated on the form. Hotel reservation form should be mailed or faxed to Arrowwood Resort at the address or fax number indicated on that form.

Please consider attending the Tuesday night pre-conference session on "Planning, Implementing and Maintaining a Local Government Website." Featured speakers are representatives from 2 cities and one from KDV Technology Consulting. Each speaker will present their experiences with developing a government website. There will also be a question and answer session plus the opportunity to view their websites online. This session is highly recommended for those cities contemplating establishing their own website or looking for ideas to improve an existing website.

The conference committee is proud to present the 39th Annual Conference with a mix of technical and non-technical sessions. If you have any questions about the conference, please contact Cathy Shuman at cathy.shuman@ci.monticello.mn.us or 763-271-3204.

NOTE: Those that are planning to attend the Wednesday afternoon session on Yoga/Stress Relief please wear exercise or comfortable clothes as you will be asked to perform some of techniques you can try to relieve stress that the instructor will be demonstrating.

FIFTH ANNUAL ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING STUDENT CONFERENCE

The MnGFOA is co-sponsoring the Fifth Annual Accounting and Auditing Student Conference along with groups such as the Minnesota Society of CPAs and Association of Public accountants.

The purpose of the conference is to introduce accounting and auditing students to what to expect when they enter their chosen profession.

As a co-sponsor, the MnGFOA will be gathering resumes from students interested in both full-time positions, and internships. MnGFOA members will provide students with information on the opportunities available in the field of government finance. The Student Accounting Conference will be held on October 24th 2002 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

If you have specific questions or would like to work in the MnGFOA booth, please contact Chris Miller, MnGFOA representative for the conference, at the City of Roseville, at 651-490-2210

DISTINGUISHED BUDGET PRESENTATION AWARD

As you plow through your entities budget process, I would like you to consider submitting your document for the budget awards program. In uncertain economic times, the budget document provides assurances that the individuals charged with the responsibility of managing an organization are doing so in a fiscally responsible manner. Moody's Investor Services stated in the June 1996 Government Finance Review that the budget is the most important document when doing a credit evaluation. The plaque looks nice hanging next to your CAFR award to. The program criteria can be obtained from GFOA's web site or you can contact Tom Kelly. Tom also has copies of past award winning budget documents in the MnGFOA Budget Library.

JOB POSTING

MINNEAPOLIS EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT FUND

ACCOUNT MANAGER

Minneapolis Employees Retirement Fund (MERF) is seeking a full-time Accounting Manager. General responsibilities include managerial duties, cash management and processing of cash-related transactions, reconciliation of various accounts and preparation of journal entries to reflect monthly financial statements on an accrual basis; preparation and review of reports for the MERF board; preparation of annual budget, preparation of annual billings to contributing employers and the State of MN for their portion of financial requirements due for normal costs, the amortization of MERF's unfunded liability and reimbursement of administrative expense; responsible for audit oversight and completion of the CAFR; and other special projects and miscellaneous duties. Applicant must be CPA with knowledge of fund accounting and accrual basis accounting. For a more complete job description and to send resume and cover letter, please email imj@merfpension.com; or fax to MERF at 612-335-5940. Beginning salary range \$48,900 - \$55,000 depending on experience. Excellent benefits package.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

As always, we are looking for information to put in the newsletter of interest to the group. Let me know of retirements, job changes promotions, certifications received or what ever else you are willing to share with the group. Give me a call or e-mail (I have a new e-mail address). If it is to get into the next newsletter, have it to me by the 24th of September.

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