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Issue 07



CENTRAL ARKANSAS CHAPTER

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Shannon Todd

Dear Fellow Chapter Members:

I hope everyone is having a great Spring so far, even though the weather might lead us to believe we are still in the middle of Winter!

Our Executive Committee has been working hard on making this a great year, so I wanted to take the time and thank them for all their hard work. I also wanted to thank the Chapter membership as a whole for making this program year such a success and making our Chapter one of the largest and best in the country. All of us working together have made our achievements possible, so let's keep up the good work and finish this year strong!

As the year draws to a close, I wanted

to let you know about some upcoming Chapter events. Details will be provided as they become available:

- Our Spring Seminar is going to be held on May 16th and 17th.
- Our Awards Banquet will be held on June 17th.

Please join us for our April 15th meeting where our very own Steven Petersen will be talking to us about ADHS online travel. Plan on staying after the meeting for another stimulating audio conference. Look forward to seeing you in the 5th floor conference room of DWS at 12 o'clock.

As always, I wish you all the best! ☺



CGFM NEWS

CGFM Education Requirement

To earn the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) designation, candidates must [apply for the CGFM Program](#) and meet four requirements: [Ethics](#), Education, [Examinations](#) and [Experience](#).

To take any of the CGFM Examinations, you must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

Your degree must be from a U.S. college or university, accredited by one of the regional or national accrediting agencies that are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. If you have a foreign degree, you must provide an evaluation report that states your degree is equivalent to a U.S. degree (bachelor's or higher) from an accredited college or university.

Required Degree Documentation

A copy of your official transcript from an accredited college or university is required before any CGFM Examinations can be taken. The official transcript must clearly state your name, the name of college or university, the fact that a degree (bachelor's or higher) was conferred, and the date the degree was awarded. Unofficial transcripts and transcripts printed from the college/university website are not accepted. Please note: CPA license or other professional certifications held are not acceptable as proof of degree.

An evaluation report is required for foreign degrees. The evaluation report must be prepared by an organization that performs foreign educational credential evaluation services and is a member of either [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services](#) or the [Association of International Credentials Evaluators](#).

Please send the transcript to the Office of Professional Certification [via email](#), fax (703.562.0361), or mail (AGA, 2208 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301). Please include your name, contact information and the date the CGFM application was submitted. The transcript must be received by AGA within six months of the date of the CGFM application. If the transcript is received after six months, a new CGFM application with an application fee is required.

Within One Year of Graduation?

If you are currently enrolled and are within one year of graduation with a bachelor's degree, you may be able to apply for the CGFM Program and start taking the CGFM Examinations before your degree is conferred. (Proof of the degree and work verification will be required before the CGFM can be awarded.) Contact the [Office of Professional Certification](#) at 800.AGA.7211 (703.684.6931) for more information. Please indicate the number of college credits completed and your expected graduation date.

Waivers

If you have not completed your bachelor's degree, you may submit a request for a waiver of the educational requirements based on the combination of your education and your years of experience in government financial management. Contact the [Office of Professional Certification](#) at 800.AGA.7211 (703.684.6931). Please indicate the number of college credits completed and the number of years of experience in

government financial management. (see the Educational Requirements page on AGA National site -

<http://www.agacgfm.org/CGFM-Certification/Certification-Process/Education-Requirement.aspx>).

CGFM Education Requirement Updated

Certified Government Financial Managers (CGFMs) represent a diverse group of professionals working in the government financial management field, including accountants, auditors, budget analysts, controllers, finance directors, financial analysts, program managers, IT professionals, CFOs and consultants. Many government financial managers come to this profession with varied academic backgrounds and expertise, which brings a breadth of knowledge that enhances the field of government financial management.

In light of this diversity and ongoing changes in the profession since the CGFM program inception in 1994, AGA's Professional Certification Board (PCB) has updated the eligibility requirement to take the CGFM examinations. From the onset of the program, a prerequisite to sit for the CGFM examinations has been a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with 24 credit hours in certain designated areas, such as accounting, auditing, finance or public administration. The PCB determined that the focus of the 24-hour requirement was too limiting to completely capture the full and ever-expanding range of knowledge, skills and abilities that represent today's government financial management workforce.

Therefore, effective immediately, CGFM candidates are no longer required to have 24 credit hours in a particular discipline or range of disciplines to be eligible to take the CGFM examinations. In order to establish their eligibility, CGFM applicants still must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and must provide a copy of an official transcript documenting their degree.

In addition to the education requirement, the knowledge and experience in government financial management remain essential components of the CGFM certification program. Accordingly, to earn their CGFM, all candidates must also pass the three rigorous CGFM examinations that test knowledge of government financial management have at least two years of professional-level work experience in government financial management. Additional information can be found at http://www.agacgfm.org/AGA/TOPICS/Archive/021113/cgfm_re_vise0213.pdf.

Online CGFM Study Guide 2

New from AGA! You can now access CGFM Study Guides 2 on the go!

Read, search and review the study guide content on your laptop, tablet or phone — a convenient way to prepare for the CGFM Examinations. Upon purchasing the online version of each guide, you'll have immediate access to the entire publication for a period of 12 months. In addition, if a newer version of this study guide is published within this period, you'll also have access to the new version! An online version of study guides 3 and 1 will be available later in 2013. Learn more at <http://aga.conferencespot.org>.







UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings are held at the Arkansas Department of Workforce Service's 5th Floor Conference Room (located at 2 Capitol Mall).

- Monday, April 15, 2013 : Arkansas Department of Human Services' Online Travel System, Presented by Steven Petersen
 - Audio conference—Finding Strength in Numbers
- Monday, May 20, 2013: FY 2013 Legislative Session Update, Presented by Stephanie Flowers
 - Audio Conference—Pension Accounting and Other Changes from GASB

Meetings are held from 12:00 noon—1:00 p.m. Audio conferences are held from 1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m. CPE will be awarded.

UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

Spring Seminar

The Spring Seminar will be held May 16-17, 2013, at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension. The topics are: Ethics, Fraud, Healthcare Act overview, Economic Development in Arkansas, and Governmental Accounting. Registration information will be provided via e-mail in the near future.

Awards Banquet

Our annual awards banquet will be held in June. Additional information will be provided in the near future!

OTHER INFORMATION/EVENTS

Chapter Recognition

Our chapter is currently at the Silver Chapter Award level and has already exceeded our goal for the year. We are well on our way to achieving the Platinum level again this year!!!

Professional Development Conference (PDC)

AGA's 62nd Annual PDC: "Big Challenges, Bigger Thinking," will be held July 14-17, 2013, in Dallas, Texas.

CGFM Preparation Q&A Webinar – for AGA Members Only

Great opportunity for Q&A and to discuss topics from the three CGFM study guides with one of our knowledgeable and dynamic instructors, free of charge. April 23, 2-4 p.m. EDT.

Learn more at <http://www.agacgfm.org/Events---CPE/Calendar/AGA-National-Events/CGFM-Preparation-Q-A.aspx>.

Webinar - Introduction to the CGFM Program

Did you miss the "Introduction to the CGFM Program" webinar on March 6 or want to share it with others? The link to the recording is on the CGFM homepage – www.agacgfm.org/cgfm.

CGFM Intensive Review Course and Examinations

Have you been studying for the CGFM Examinations and are almost ready to take them? Sign up for AGA's Intensive Review Course and take the CGFM Examinations before the PDC. Don't miss this opportunity to earn your CGFM. The Intensive Review Course will take place from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 11, and Friday, July 12. The CGFM Examinations will be offered by appointment only on July 13-14. Learn more at <http://www.agacgfm.org/PDC2013/Take-the-CGFM-Exams.aspx>

Onsite CGFM course options

Did you know that AGA offers three different options for holding CGFM courses onsite, including a small group option? See <http://www.agacgfm.org/gfm> for more information.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: March 18, 2013
Meeting Time: 11:00 a.m.
Meeting Location:
DWS 5th Floor Conference Room

Members Present:

Shannon Todd	Richard Drilling
Chandria Jones	Gerald Plafcan
Florence Price	Brenda Jackson
Will Cottrell	Steven Petersen
Lateisha Moore	Kaki Roberts
May Neal	

The meeting was called to order by Shannon Todd at 11:06 a.m.

CGFM Update

Per Brenda Jackson, the Proclamation to declare the month of March CGFM Month has been submitted to the Secretary of the State's office. Brenda proposed that we all wear red tops and dark bottoms for the picture with the Governor. We will be notified by e-mail when the picture is scheduled.

Minutes

Chandria Jones e-mailed the minutes from our last meeting to all board members prior to the meeting. No corrections were made. Will Cottrell made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Gerald Plafcan seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Community Service

Lateisha Moore provided a community service update. All receipts from the Gingerbread Tree have been submitted to Steven Petersen. Lateisha also submitted a check for

the balance due.

Treasurer's Report

Steven Petersen e-mailed financial reports to all board members prior to the meeting. One correction was made. The December 2012 checks are listed as 2013, instead of 2012. Brenda Jackson made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. May Neal seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Scholarships

May Neal will speak with the Dean of the Business Department at UCA and UAPB to let them know that we will be giving them the scholarships. The scholarships must be awarded to Business majors. We will invite the recipients to attend the Awards Banquet.

Nominations

Per Kaki Roberts, the by-laws state that we need to rotate members in the various key positions every two years. Per Brenda Jackson, the intent was to rotate positions, not members. Kaki suggested that we develop a nominating committee. Brenda suggested opening up nominations for all positions. Shannon will e-mail the membership to let everyone know which positions are open for nominations, and she will also announce it at the next monthly meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

**Association of Government Accountants
Central Arkansas Chapter
FY 13 Statement of Activities
February 28, 2013**

Revenue	Unrestricted
Education Seminars	3,825
Banquets	1,560
Dues	589
AGA National	-
Interest Income	11
Miscellaneous Income	1
Total Revenues	5,985
Expenses	
Program Expenses	
Fall Seminar	1,269
Spring Seminar	-
Audioconference Expenses	384
PDC Expense	-
Holiday Party	1,983
Awards Banquet	-
Awards	-
Speaker Expense	-
Scholarships/Memorials	-
Community Service	400
Promotional Supplies	-
Recruitment	-
Website	188
Total Program Expenses	4,224
Management and Administrative Expenses	
Professional Fees	-
Post Office Box Rent	86
Executive Committee meeting expense	495
Banking Fees	146
Miscellaneous	11
Total Management and Administrative Expenses	738
Total Expenses	4,962
Change in Net Assets	1,024
Net Assets - Beginning of the Year	25,824
Net Assets - End of Year	26,848

It's Debt-Ceiling Madness Again. Why You Should Stay Calm (Sort Of)

By Catherine Hollander

The nation's borrowing limit will be reached once again on May 19. Even though the Treasury Department can take so-called extraordinary measures to push the real deadline for default out to sometime this summer, it sounds an awful lot like 2011 when the country stood ready to default. But a feeling is growing among some economists and political experts that the markets won't be as jittery this time.

In 2011, U.S. markets slid 15 percent between the week leading up to the Aug. 2 deadline for raising the debt limit and the early days of trading after credit-rating agency Standard & Poor's cut the country's top rating due to the debt-limit fighting. Congress temporarily suspended the debt ceiling with much less fanfare in February.

What's changed in 2013 is the politics.

Analysts at Eurasia Group say that's because both sides are willing to go small. "Obama will use his budget to renew calls for a 'grand bargain' that remains out of reach; ultimately he will sign either a short- or a long-term debt-ceiling increase later this year," they wrote in a recent research note. "Republicans will present an initial hard-line position on their debt-ceiling demands, but will ultimately accept a smaller debt-ceiling increase if a bigger deal cannot be agreed."

"While rhetoric will heat up and negotiations will drag through the summer, we expect that well in advance of a likely August deadline it will become clear Washington is choosing between a small or a large debt-ceiling increase rather than a fiscal deal or default, which should put a floor under market concern," they said.

The rhetoric has already begun to heat up. Sen. Rob Portman, an Ohio Republican, said Tuesday that the debt limit has "been, frankly, the most effective way" to talk about deficit reduction. "I think this is an opportunity and I think the timing is actually pretty good," Portman said at a breakfast hosted by *Politico*. "So let's deal with it, let's use the debt limit, you know, as leverage."

House Republicans, for their part, have indicated a desire to move forward with legislation that would direct the Treasury Department to prioritize payments in the event the debt ceiling is reached. Democrats say this is an attempt to minimize the impact of reaching the debt limit.

But if analysts feel that some sort of agreement to raise the ceiling in advance of the deadline is more likely now than it was two years ago, the economy could change that.

"If the economy were to suddenly soften, I think that might make a [fiscal] deal less likely because people would say 'enough

already' [with deficit reduction]," said Greg Valliere, chief political strategist at the Potomac Research Group.

Although economic data of late has been softer, the economy is stronger than it was in 2011, and better able to withstand shocks. Still, if it does come to an eleventh-hour showdown over the nation's creditworthiness this summer, a la 2011, economists have mixed views about how markets would respond.

Some say markets are tired of lurching from crisis to crisis and would be less jittery in response to the latest fiscal fight. The country has definitely seen its share in recent years: the spring 2011 government-shutdown fight; the summer 2011 debt-ceiling showdown; the winter 2011 payroll-tax debate; the winter 2012 fiscal-cliff fight; the debate over the March 1 automatic spending cuts known as sequestration.

Europe has also had its share of crises, most recently the tempest surrounding Cyprus's banking sector and whether the measures to keep Cyprus afloat set a dangerous precedent for the rest of the eurozone. "We've just had a lot of crisis fatigue," said Joseph LaVorgna, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank.

"We've gone through a number of these things and it does seem likely that at this point, until there's a reason — a very clear reason — to worry about a failure to increase the debt limit, markets may assume that it simply will happen," said Alec Phillips, an economist at Goldman Sachs.

Not everyone agrees. Research from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York suggests that a new debt-ceiling showdown could be worse than 2011, not better. "The relatively benign effects of the 2011 U.S. debt-ceiling crisis on U.S. financial markets appear to have been serendipitous, as the U.S. and European debt crises occurred concurrently," Fed economists wrote in a post last month, referring to very real fears that Greece would collapse and bring the euro down with it. "Money funds nevertheless reacted to the increased riskiness of Treasuries by dramatically decreasing the maturities of Treasuries held in their portfolios during the debt-ceiling crisis. This behavior suggests that we can't be sure that the effects of future fiscal crises on financial markets will be similarly benign," they continued.

Of course, the calculus completely changes if the country actually fails to raise the debt limit and enters into default. Pretty much everyone agrees that would be very, very bad for the economy, calling the country's creditworthiness into question for the first time in history. But — at least at this point — that doesn't seem likely.

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