

Texas Government Finance

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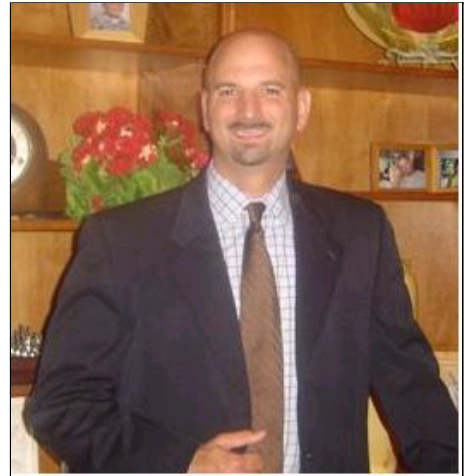


President's Welcome

Greetings everyone!

I am extremely pleased to report that the 2007 Fall Conference in San Antonio was another huge success for GFOAT. With over 300 government finance professionals registered for a variety of sessions ranging from "Implementing OPEB; What Now?" to "If Your Electric Bill Gives You Paranoia, It's for Good Reason," this conference marks one of our best attendance levels ever. I hope you came back to work as fired up as I did to put what was learned into practice.

A word of thanks is due to everyone who contributed to making this conference such a huge success, especially Max Duplant, Corrine Steeger, Becky Brooks Grimm, and the rest of the Program Development Committee. Once again, they did an excellent job of compiling a fantastic list of speakers and events and their efforts are very much appreciated. Special thanks also go out to all of our sponsors. They not only contribute to the organization financially, but also provide valuable services and are more than willing to help you through any challenge. Last but not least, a big **Thank You** goes out to each of you that took time out of your busy schedule to attend. It's not always easy being away, but hopefully it was worth the investment. For those of you that couldn't make it this time, you were missed and we hope to see you in the spring.



At the conference, Bennett Sandlin, TML Legal Counsel, gave an insightful overview of what to expect during the upcoming legislative session, including a report on decisions made by the TML Resolutions Committee at the conference last month. This coming session should prove to be a critical one for local government finance, so be sure to stay tuned and keep your respective organizations informed. You will get time-sensitive updates through our membership email notices and can also get updates via www.tml.org. If you want to be added to the GFOAT Legislative Committee's contact Bret Starr at bstarr@ci.irving.tx.us.

The GFOA Annual Conference is coming up this June 10-13, in Anaheim, California. The deadline for responding to GFOA's "call for topics" is this December. If there's a particular subject you would like to see covered, make your request known by going to www.gfoa.org. Registration for the conference is now open online, so be sure to sign up today to ensure that you get the hotel of your choice. Also, it was recently announced by GFOA that the 2011 conference will be held in San Antonio, again. And, as if we didn't have enough to be proud of, Texas will be well represented this coming year on the GFOA Board, with the election of Charles Cox (1999-2000 GFOAT President) as the President-Elect and Kathy DuBose (1998-1999 GFOAT President) as a member of the Board. Way to go guys!

As you've heard me say before, my primary goals for this year are to encourage the continued growth of GFOAT, boost regional participation, and for the next generation of leadership to step up to the plate and get involved. Several of you have already responded like gangbusters, which is great. However, the challenge still stands for the rest to **tell a friend or colleague, get active in your region, and help lead the organization.**

I hope you have a great Thanksgiving with lots of time to kick back and enjoy the company of family and friends, eat too much, and relax a little (and cheer the Dallas Cowboys on, too!). Take care and God Bless! **Steve Williams**

Training Calendar/News

UPCOMING EVENTS

2006 Fall Conference On line evaluations due out soon. Please complete and return.

2007 Spring Institute Save the Date - April 22-24. See [preliminary info.](#)

[GFOA Registration Open -](#)

[GFOA 2007 - Call for Topics - DEADLINE DEC 15](#)

Welcome New Members

Ryan Adams, Director of Finance and Human Resources, Little Elm (region 8)
Emily Aldrich, Accountant, Pflugerville (region 10)
Martin Avila, Accounting Manager, Irving (region 13)
David Balsamo, Cash & Debt Administrator, Arlington (region 8)
Alice Benjiman, Accountant, Taylor (region 10)
Jim Black, Managing Advisory Director, Global Beneficial Securities (region 14)
Johanna "Joey" Black, Financial Analyst, Baytown (region 14)
Laura Chiota, Senior Financial Analyst, Waco (region 9)
Gay Collins, Accountant, LaPorte (region 14)
Heather Costancio, Accountant, Alamo Heights (region 7)
Cheryl Davenport, Special Projects Manager, Flower Mound (region 8)
Elvia Esteres-Garza, Finance Director, Diboll (region 16)
Andrea Gardner, Asst. City Manager/Director of Finance, Copperas Cove (region 9)
Carol Howell, Accountant, Baytown (region 14)
Mary Huneycutt, Comptroller, Mustang Water District (region 8)
Carolyn Kaplan, Accountant, Richardson (region 13)
Eileen Kennedy, Asst. Town Secretary, Double Oak (region 8)
Deborah Korinchock, CFO, New Braunfels (region 7)
Michael Light, Cost Analyst, Garland (region 13)
Kelly Miller, Accountant, Heath (region 13)
Sherra Montz, Manager, Maximus (region 13)
Patrick Morris, Chief Accountant, North Texas Tollway Authority (region 13)
Jonita Morrow Murray, Director of Finance & Administrative Services, Decatur (region 8)
Tiffany Orandi, Accountant II/AP Supervisor, Baytown (region 14)
Shirley Rosser, Accountant, Duncanville (region 13)
Doug Scott, Senior Director, Fitch Ratings (region 10)
Sharon Sullivan, AP Supervisor, Sugar Land (region 14)
Candy White, Vice President, Wells Fargo (region 7)
Todd Williams, Financial Analyst, Upper Trinity River Water District (region 8)
Brett Wolff, Director of Finance, La Grange (region 10)

... on the move...

Retiring: Terry Knudsen, Webster

Technical Articles

Business Continuity Planning for Local Government submitted by: Tyler Technologies

When you think of disasters, you might think of hurricanes, floods and wildfire among many of the headline grabbing calamities occurring today. While these are definitely disasters, current thinking also includes any phenomenon which causes a disruption to your daily routine as a disaster. These include lightning strikes, burst plumbing, hazardous material response as well as a server crash. If lightning strikes the grocery store and they are closed for a day, you might be able to live with that. If lightning strikes your office the day before paychecks are printed, that's a disaster!

The commercial sector has led the way on current pre-disaster mitigation planning techniques. Termed a Business Continuity Plan (BCP), an entire industry with certified business continuity planners and managers has sprung up. Public sector can benefit from the experience brought to us by General Motors or Intel. While you don't have assembly lines that can lose thousands of dollars per minute in downtime, you do have consequences if services to your customers- internal or external- are interrupted. Be aware, these are not community disaster planning and response plans. You have those in place already. A BCP is for critical business processes such as cash collections, payroll and accounts payable. How long can these be down before they have a negative impact on your employees, departments, or even your own career?

Business Continuity Planning is the written plan of people, places, and processes to reduce (not prevent) the impact of disasters on your business processes. Homeland Security calls this Pre-Disaster Mitigation. Five major categories in BCP are:

- Disaster Response- If it happens, what do you do first?
- Disaster Declaration and Mobilization- It's happened, get moving!
- Interim Processing – You are live at an alternate site.
- Site Restoration and Return to Normalcy- This can take more than a year!
- Plan Maintenance- This should be a living document.

To have a better understanding of the scope of disaster response for your business processes, examination of your environment is paramount. For your first BCP, limit your scope to five possible disasters affecting five business processes at one facility. You can expand these later. For each of the five business processes you have selected, what impact will there be on your stakeholders if that process is interrupted? How long can cash collections be down? How long can payroll wait? You may categorize your selected business processes in one of three ways- critical, essential, or delayed. (See side bar on Process Criticality.) Now think of your environment. Are computers on the floor? Are surge protectors on each computer? You may be vulnerable to flooding disasters or lightning strikes. Remember a burst pipe on the floor above you can flood your office. Are proper procedure manuals in place in case essential personnel are not there? Payrolls can be run in a disaster, but are personnel sufficiently cross-trained for backup? Speaking of your staff, who is essential? If an emergency evacuation occurs, do they know they still need to show up somewhere for emergency instructions? And finally, what about your IT support? Have they been briefed on what to do when you have a business process interruption? Now that you are thinking along these topics, let's examine the scope of your recovery mission statement.

A recovery mission statement defines the scope of the recovery, sets the tone for the process, is relevant to the responsibility of the IT staff, and is relevant to your business processes. You must also define what a disaster is in order to know when to "pull the trigger." For example, a disaster could be defined as any unforeseen event which directly or indirectly impacts your critical business processes beyond acceptable service levels which would result in the decision to execute the disaster recovery plan. Each process you have selected will have its own recovery requirements in a disaster, so you must examine each one. BCP planning assists in defining escalation levels, or how long each process must be interrupted before a disaster is declared. Your recovery objectives should include recovery timeframes to restore processes, data, and service to pre-disaster levels. Other issues to consider might include provisions for employee assistance, both financial and emotional, press releases, and more, so be prepared.

Definitions of Process Criticality

1. **Critical: Business processes supported by the system would, in the event of a major interruption,**

result in unacceptable financial and operational impact in 24 hours.

2. **Essential: Business processes would be impacted, but departments can operate at acceptable levels for a longer time frame, usually up to seven days. Manual procedures exist, but cannot be sustained for long or significant "catching up" is required.**
3. **Delayed: Business processes would be moderately impacted but near-normal operations could be sustained for 30 or more days without the system. Manual procedures exist.** <![endif-->

Sample Recovery Mission Statement

To provide a process which, in the event of an unforeseen disaster, supports easily-implemented and cost-effective recovery of critical business functions. The objectives are:

- **To minimize the time required to restore critical business functions**
- **To enable the processing of the critical application systems at an alternate site in accordance with the Recovery Objectives**
- **To develop skilled personnel to carry out a predefined set of tasks.**

When disaster does occur, teams need to be staffed with identified personnel and predefined response procedures documented and tested. Your teams could include an emergency management team, a salvage team and various critical function teams. Capable people should be on the teams and you should follow the guidelines below if staffing allows.

Teams:

Do not necessarily follow the organization chart

Should each have a primary and alternate leader

Should not have members active on another team at the same time

Should have a clearly defined mission

Should be able to function independently

May be organized by location

May be organized by mission

May be organized by function

May be changed at a later date

Team responsibilities are based on predefined objectives. Each member of the team should have a set of objectives at each predefined site. Generally, a command center, a hot site, a cold site, various user sites, and of course your home site where the disaster occurred, will be identified. A command center is just that- a command and control area, also known as an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). If it is a community disaster you may be able to piggyback onto the public safety EOC if available. A hot site is a predetermined location where you walk in, flip a switch, and all of your systems are ready to go. This takes careful planning for data, supplies, and personnel. A cold site is your plan

B if the hot site is not available or only temporarily available. For example, your hot site can be any facility with equipment already preinstalled with synchronized applications and data. A cold site could be an empty office or warehouse space with an internet connection. User sites are where individual essential personnel can go either to interact with your customers-cash collections for example, or to go off in a safe environment and perform interim processing.

Interim procedures should be planned out in advance for the five critical processes you selected. Simply document work-around procedures for each one. You may want to have receipts for cash processing, checks for accounts payable and payroll, tables, chairs, and signage directing stakeholders to the various user sites. Additionally you may need workstations, fax machines, modems and copiers. Where will you get them if your original equipment cannot be salvaged?

Returning to normal operations requires salvage teams, recovery resources, and predefined processes to assist you. Salvage teams enter the home site as soon as possible to recover equipment to aid in your cold site operations, which will later be returned to your restored facility. Recovery resources are personnel and vendors required to restore normalcy. Examples include restoration companies for fire and water damage, and electricians and IT staff for lightning strikes. It is also necessary to document all work flow for the critical processes, in case essential personnel are lost or unavailable. As a side note, FEMA will ask for documented procedures for any disaster costs for which you are requesting reimbursement. They will be good to have.

The plan you have constructed should be a living document. Review the document annually to ensure named personnel are still employed and the processes are still valid. With a continuity plan in place, you will be better prepared for most disasters. You may not be thanked for having a plan, but you will definitely get noticed if you don't have a plan and you needed one.

Tyler Technologies

Tyler Technologies provides application software and consulting services to local governments in Texas. For an online Environmental Assessment Survey go to www.incode-inc.com/BCP/index.html. For more information on Business Continuity Planning and Pre-Disaster Mitigation, please contact Chip Lambert, CPA at Tyler Technologies, INCODE Division at (866) 468-2119 or at chip.lambert@tylertech.com.

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Welcome to our new Sponsors - be looking for more information on them in future newsletters:

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Committees and Regions

Region 8/13: Dallas Fort Worth. Next meeting date: **January 19, 2007**, Arlington TX. Contact **Dana Navarrette** DNavarrette@nctcog.org

Region 14: Gulf Coast Chapter. Next meeting date: **December 14, 2006**, Monument Inn, LaPorte, TX, celebrating retirement of Terry Knudsen, Webster. Contact **Tony Sekaly** 713-535-4334 or 800-681-4121 - tds@coastalsecurities.com

Region 3: Regional Director is **Sarianne Beversdorf** sbeversdorf@door.net at Levelland and Assistant Director is **Jack Keller** jkeller@ci.plainview.tx.us at Plainview.

Region 10: New Regional Assistant Director is **Sarah Mangham** sarahmangham@austin.rr.com

FRRR Committee: The committee has drafted a [response](#) to the latest GASB Proposed Concepts statement.

Professional Development: Next exam **Feb 14-16** in DFW, Houston and Austin areas; location and times still pending.

Ethics: Applications being accepted now through **January 31** for Lewis F. McLain, Jr. [Ethics in Leadership Award](#)

FYI: IRS announces that beginning January 1, 2007 the mileage reimbursement rate will increase from 44.5 cents to 48.5 cents per mile.

Job Postings

City of Missouri City-ACCOUNTANT (BUDGET)

Job Posted on: 11/22/2006

Closing Date: 1/21/2007

Salary: ANNUAL SALARY: \$30,456 - 38,076*

[View Details](#)

City of Sherman -Director of Finance

Job Posted on: 11/19/2006

Closing Date: 1/18/2007

Salary: Salary: \$80,000 - \$89,000 DOQ

[View Details](#)

City of College Station-Budget Manager

Job Posted on: 11/19/2006

Closing Date: 12/15/2006

Salary: \$49,009 - \$60,052/DOQ

[View Details](#)

Town of Little Elm-ACCOUNTING MANAGER

Job Posted on: 11/15/2006

Closing Date: 12/5/2006

Salary: \$57,999 to 75,664 - D.O.Q.

[View Details](#)

CITY OF PEARLAND, TX -PROJECT FINANCIAL ANALYST

Job Posted on: 11/15/2006

Closing Date: 11/27/2006

Salary: Not specified

[View Details](#)

City of La Marque-Accountant II

Job Posted on: 11/8/2006

Closing Date: 1/7/2007

Salary: \$40,090 to \$48,834 annually

[View Details](#)

City of Lancaster, TX-CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

Job Posted on: 11/6/2006

Closing Date: 1/5/2007

Salary: SALARY RANGE \$51,400 - \$75,400

[View Details](#)

City of Denton-Chief Financial Officer

Job Posted on: 11/3/2006

Closing Date: 1/2/2007

Salary: Salary Negotiable DOQ

[View Details](#)

City of Bryan - Bryan Texas Utilities-Controller

Job Posted on: 11/3/2006

Closing Date: 1/2/2007

Salary: Depends on Qualifications

[View Details](#)

CityBase.Net/GovSTAND-Retired Governmental Accountants/Accounting Clerks

Job Posted on: 11/2/2006

Closing Date: 1/1/2007

Salary: Dependent on experience and availability

[View Details](#)

City of San Antonio-Assistant Management and Budget Director

Job Posted on: 10/29/2006

Closing Date: 12/28/2006

Salary: Starting salary is negotiable, depending on experience and qualifications. Benefits include subsidized healthcare coverage, retirement plan, life insurance, paid leave, car and cell phone allowance, and voluntary benefits. This position is exempt from Civil Service and subject to at-will employment status.

[View Details](#)

City of Lubbock-Director of Human Resources

Job Posted on: 10/27/2006

Closing Date: 11/30/2006

Salary: DOE

[View Details](#)

City of Rosenberg-Finance Director

Job Posted on: 10/25/2006

Closing Date: 12/24/2006

Salary: Salary commensurate with applicant's education and qualifications

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City of Greenville, Texas-Finance Director

Job Posted on: 10/20/2006

Closing Date: 11/30/2006

Salary: Mid to Upper \$80's

[View Details](#)

City of McKinney-Payroll Administrator

Job Posted on: 10/19/2006

Closing Date: 12/18/2006

Salary: \$38,395

[View Details](#)

City of Friendswood-Budget Manager

Job Posted on: 10/18/2006

Closing Date: 12/17/2006

Salary: \$41,135 to \$66,047

[View Details](#)

City of Pearland-Buyer I

Job Posted on: 10/18/2006

Closing Date: 12/17/2006

Salary: \$16.53/hour (minimum)

[View Details](#)

City of Fort Worth-Financial Reporting Coordinator

Job Posted on: 10/3/2006

Closing Date: 12/31/2006

Salary: \$55,008-\$87,960 Annually DOQ

[View Details](#)

City of Texarkana, Texas-Grants Manager

Job Posted on: 10/2/2006

Closing Date: 12/1/2006

Salary: \$45,319-\$50,000

[View Details](#)

City of Allen-Accountant

Job Posted on: 9/26/2006

Closing Date: 11/25/2006

Salary: \$1,443 - \$2,165/bi-weekly

[View Details](#)

City of North Richland Hills-Purchasing Manager

Job Posted on: 9/14/2006

Closing Date: 12/1/2006

Salary: Hiring Range \$46,380-\$57,976/yr Depending on Qualifications

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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PRESIDENT ELECT - Max Duplant, Beaumont; 409-880-3767 (Program Development/Legislative liaison); mduplant@ci.beaumont.tx.us
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MEMBER - Anita Thetford, Hurst; 817-788-7011; anitath@ci.hurst.tx.us
MEMBER (EX OFFICIO) Rhonda Young, Dir of Finance, Baytown; 281-420-6529; rhonda.young@baytown.org

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