

April 2003

President's Message

Zane Johnston, Finance Director, City of Tracy

People Will Die

Cities are facing revenue losses through possible State budget actions, and many of us in local government finance have been asked to describe the impact of such action on our communities. Be careful how you answer this question. We must be accurate in assessing impacts. Know your agency's implementation strategy for budget cuts before describing their impact to your constituents. Credibility is important.

Recently, a prominent county sheriff, addressing local government budget cuts in public safety at a State Capitol press conference, stated that the result of the proposed cuts would mean that "people will die." The problem with such a bold statement is that one must be able to back up one's assertions. Now this sheriff is in a very difficult position: either his prediction comes true (a horrible thing to wish for in this instance) or he loses credibility when it doesn't.

If your organization intends to weather a loss in revenue by deferring maintenance or utilizing equipment replacement funds, then that is what you should say to the media and your community when they ask about possible impacts. Most elected officials will look to make budget cuts with the least immediate impact on operations, personnel and programs. And most will bet on better times returning in the future, rendering long term solutions unnecessary. Don't lose your credibility with your community by describing impacts that will not be implemented politically.

We may be tempted to describe dire consequences of possible budget cuts in order to solicit the support of the community. In truth, I believe we have a much more persuasive argument when we say that local government revenue should remain local. Our citizens understand this.

Even in wealthier cities, it is not so much an issue of whether the City can afford to give money to the State, but whether it is sound public policy to do so. Citizens can see how their money is spent in their community, but they rarely see tangible results of how it is spent by the State. The average citizen knows the State has been reckless in its fiscal policies over the

CSMFO Legislative Seminar in Sacramento May 14-15

Visit www.csmfo.org, or call 916/658-8210 for more information
(See attached registration form)

past few years. We don't need to oversell the issue by making bold claims in an effort to persuade public opinion.

Credibility always trumps emotion.

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The MiniNews is your newsletter! Take advantage of our monthly publication by sharing with us your ideas. CSMFO is always seeking input from all members on topics in any department section.

Don't forget to visit the website at www.csmfo.org for the latest news!

Attachments: CSMFO Legislative Seminar Registration Form,
2003 AICPA Outstanding CPA in Government
Award Application



California Society of Municipal Finance Officers

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Nominees Wanted for 2003 AICPA Outstanding CPA in Government Award

Apr. 1 is the deadline for nominations to be considered for the 2003 AICPA Outstanding CPA in Government Award. Each nomination must include a completed nomination form and letter of recommendation from the candidate's government employer. In addition, the application should include, at a minimum, a letter of recommendation from either the nominee's state CPA society, other professional association, or an AICPA or state CPA society member. For re-nominees, complete updated materials must be provided for consideration in the current year.

The award has two major purposes. The first is to recognize the achievements of CPAs employed in government. The second is to promote the CPA designation as the premier professional credential for accounting, auditing, and finance professionals in government. The award is presented at the AICPA's National Governmental Accounting and Auditing Update conference:

To be eligible the nominee must be:

- A member of the AICPA and/or a state CPA society employed in local government. Government employees who have been retired for less than one year are also eligible.
- Distinguished by having made a sustained and significant contribution to the increased efficiency and effectiveness of his or her government organization.
- Distinguished by having made a significant contribution to the growth and enhancement of the profession.
- Nominated through a formal process in accordance with the specified requirements.
- Currently not serving as the president of his or her state CPA society, or as a member of the AICPA Board of Directors or AICPA Government Performance and Accountability Committee.

For more information, please contact Pam Green at 212-596-6034 or pgreen@aicpa.org

Please see attached application.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Intermediate Governmental Accounting Training

March 11, 2003

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CSMFO Legislative Seminar

May 14, 2003

Sacramento, California

CMTA Annual Seminar

April 28-May2

Indian Wells, California

Please visit www.csmfo.org for more information.



Chapter Corner: Monterey Bay Chapter

Marc Pimentel, Financial Services Manager, City of Monterey



The Monterey Bay Chapter consists of 18 municipalities across three counties. Our meetings are upbeat, friendly and informative and occur at least once a quarter for either a luncheon meeting in one of Monterey's excellent restaurants (Tarpy's Roadhouse) or, as part of a larger, local GASB Reporting Model round-table group.



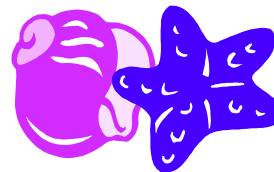
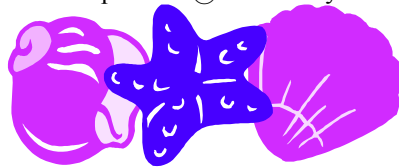
The general attendance at our meetings is 20-25 members and guests and includes participants from local special districts and private sector companies.



We have expanded our 2003 meeting schedule to include 4 GASB 34 sessions in addition to our quarterly meetings. In addition, we hope to coordinate our efforts with local CMTA meetings for 2003.

We are looking forward to another year of enjoyable and informative meetings. We use traditional mail in addition to e-mail to notify members and other participants of future events. We strongly encourage and receive participation from other agencies (districts and city's outside our area) and thank them and our wonderful Chapter members for their participation and support and thank our speakers for their professional knowledge and insight.

If you would like more information regarding our chapter or would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact me at the City of Monterey Finance Department, City Hall, Monterey, CA 93940, 831-646-3947 or pimentel@ci.monterey.ca.us.



CSMFO Chapter Chairs

Chapter Assistant - Tawni Escudero, League of California Cities 916/658-8210 or tescudero@cacities.org

| Chapter | Chairperson | Telephone | Email Address |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|--|
| Central Coast | Lynda Snodgrass | 805/473-5432 | lsnodgrass@arroyogrande.org |
| Central Los Angeles | Robert S. Ridley | 562/801-4395 | bridley@pico-rivera.org |
| Central Valley | Vacant | | |
| Channel Counties | Christine Cohen | 805/654-3151 | christine.cohen@mail.co.ventura.ca.us |
| Coachella Valley | Jenny Barnes | 760/770-0321 | jbarnes@cathedralcity.gov |
| Desert Mountain | Kevin Smith | 760/240-7000 | ksmith@applevalley.org |
| East Bay (S.F.) | Mary Dodge | 925/671-3182 | maryd@ci.concord.ca.us |
| Imperial County | Vacant | | |
| Inland Empire | Bernie Simon | 909/487-7340 | bscra2@netscape.net |
| Monterey Bay | Marc Pimentel | 831/646-3947 | pimentel@ci.monterey.ca.us |
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| Northeast Counties | Steve Strong | 530/225-4087 | sstrong@ci.redding.ca.us |
| Northwest Counties | Carolynn Thomas | 707/441-4114 | cjthomas@eurekaweb.com |
| Orange County | Darren Hernandez | 562/905-9730 | darren_hernandez@lahabracity.com |
| Peninsula | Thomas Fil | 650/595-7435 | tfil@ci.belmont.ca.us |
| Sacramento Valley | Barbara Brock | 916/645-3314 | bbrock@ci.lincoln.ca.us |
| Sacramento Valley | Susan Mahoney | 916/725-2448 | smahoney@ci.citrus-heights.ca.us |
| San Diego County | Carol Swindell | 760/435-3839 | cswindell@ci.oceanside.ca.us |
| San Gabriel Valley | Josh Betta | 626/403-7250 | jbetta@ci.south-pasadena.ca.us |
| San Gabriel Valley | Tracey Hause | 626/574-5400 | thause@ci.arcadia.ca.us |
| South Bay | Jag Pathirana | 310/970-7927 | jpathirana@earthlink.net |
| South San Joaquin | Sandra Montoya | 559/713-4423 | smontoya@ci.visalia.ca.us |

Finance Industry Comments: Identifying and Preventing ACH Fraud

Jeffrey Douglass, CCM AAP, Bank of the West, Business Dev. Officer

Just when you thought you had fraud licked (you are using secure check stock and positive pay services, right?), you come to find still more unauthorized debits against your account. How is this happening?

With the advent of the Web, telephone ACH payment authorization, and consumer online payment capabilities such as those for fitness clubs, cellular phone services, and online shopping, a new point of access to your accounts has developed. This type of fraud is not new-banks have been aware of ACH fraud for a few years-however the number of reported fraud incidents has grown dramatically over the last 18 months. In fact, growth in the ACH overall is consistently at 10% year-over-year in the number of transactions, according to the National Automated Clearing House Association (NACHA).

What exactly is ACH fraud? In a sense, it is the same basic fraud as what you've known with checks, but an individual uses the Automated Clearing House (ACH) to steal an organization's funds. Here's how ACH fraud typically works:

- A fraud perpetrator obtains your checking account number and financial institution routing transit number
- The person accesses the Web to pay for goods and services, by electing to pay through an EFT debit to a checking account, at which point your account information is entered
- Debits are posted to your account, merchant is paid, and the fraud perpetrator makes off with illicit goods and services.

It is likely that you haven't yet noticed this type of fraudulent activity against your account. However, here are a few things you should know so that you can prevent such fraud:

- Review your account for unauthorized activity daily. The NACHA Rules and the Uniform Commercial Code states that you can return these unauthorized debits by notifying your bank within 24 hours of the settlement of such transactions.
- Keep an accurate record of the entities you have allowed to send debits to your account. Each ACH transaction that posts against your account is reflected on your bank statement, and on the statement must be shown the name of the party debiting your organization's account, and the amount and settlement date of the transaction.
- Limit the number of accounts for which you authorize ACH debits to be posted. Doing so will simplify your daily task of reviewing your accounts for unauthorized activity, since you will know that other accounts should have no ACH debit activity.

You can also implement an ACH block/filter on your accounts. Many banks offer such a service, which, as it sounds, allows you to set up either a complete block on all ACH debit activity, or establish a filter, allowing only those items from companies you have authorized, to post to your account. This is done by obtaining a list of approved company IDs from you, and setting up filters based on your exact specifications. Then, should an unauthorized ACH debit be received at your bank for settlement to your account, the bank will automatically return it to the sender.

Even with examples of fraud, the Automated Clearing House remains a secure, convenient, and cost-effective payments method. Being informed about the risks associated with the ACH such as those presented here, and taking steps to prevent ACH fraud, will continue to make this payments network a success for all.

A Time to Speak Out

Robert Torrez, CFO/Director of Financial Management, City of Long Beach

On March 10th the Legislature approved mid-year budget cuts totaling approximately \$3.5 billion in the current fiscal year and \$5.0 billion in the 2003-4 fiscal year that begins on July 1st. The package of cuts appears to have no direct impact on city budgets.

Prior to the final Assembly vote, a joint legal opinion issued by both the Governor's office and Controller Westley identified the criteria that would permit the state Finance Director to precipitate the pulling of the VLF trigger. The significance of this ruling is that various statewide politicians would, in their minds, not be held individually liable for initiating an unpopular fee increase.

However, despite the passage of midyear budget cuts and agreement on the VLF trigger mechanism, cities are still at substantial risk during this legislative session. For one thing, when the VLF trigger is activated it will still require a minimum of 60 to 90 days for the Department of Motor Vehicles to implement an increase in the VLF rate which will effectively delay the necessary infusion of funds generated from that action.

In addition, the action taken by the Legislature plus restoration of the VLF only addresses \$12 billion of a total deficit of \$35 billion. The remaining \$23 billion must be resolved during the 2003-2004 budget debate. Because many legislators agree that local governments should pay their so-called fair share to reduce the deficit, we must be particularly vigilant during these negotiations.

The CSMFO has always been dedicated to improving the knowledge, skills, and performance of individuals responsible for municipal and other local government fiscal policy and management. However, in these challenging times it has become apparent that in addition to furthering educational goals, it would be valuable if the organization actively promoted the advocacy of those positions important to our member cities.

- ♦ Consistent with the CSMFO's Advo-

(continued on page 7)

Chapter Meeting Notices

Coachella Valley

Jenny Barnes, Coachella Valley
Chapter Chair, Accountant II,
City of Cathedral City

Date: Monday, April 21, 2003

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: CVAG Conference Room
73-710 Fred Waring Drive
PALM DESERT, CA 92234

Menu: Assorted Sandwiches, Salad
Fruit, Chips, Desert and Drinks

Cost: \$15.00 per person

Speaker: Representative from the Palm
Springs Desert Resorts
Convention and Visitors
Authority

Topic: The State and Future of Tourism
in the Coachella Valley

RSVP: No later than Tuesday, April 15,
2003
Reservations not cancelled by
this date will be billed.
Marisol Delgado
(760) 398-3502

CSMFO MiniNews



1400 K Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: Tawni Escudero
Phone: 916/658-8210
Fax: 916/658-8240
Email: tescudero@cacities.org

Up the Ladder

FINANCE DIRECTOR - City of Oakdale, California (Pop. 16,500). *Competitive salary and benefit package. Negotiable DOQ (Current \$88,000)* The ideal candidate will have strong management and professional skills in all aspects of financial management and a thorough knowledge of government accounting practices, procedures, and budgeting. A BA in business administration, accounting, or closely related field and four years of increasingly responsible municipal finance and accounting experience, two years in a supervisory position. Submit resumes to City Administrator, City of Oakdale, 280 North Third Ave., Oakdale, CA, 95361, (209) 847-3031, by 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 25, 2003. Call for brochure or view at www.ci.oakdale.ca.us. EOE

ACCOUNTANT - (\$4,003 - \$6,005/month) - The Southern California Association of Governments, located in downtown Los Angeles, CA, seeks a detail-oriented, organized self-starter who has initiative and good judgment to provide professional accounting duties in support of the accounts payable function. Requires a B.S. in accounting or a related field and two years of accounting experience with a focus on accounts payable. Public sector experience is preferred. Call (213) 236-1910 to request an application and announcement or visit our website at www.scag.ca.gov. Final Filing Date: Open until filled - First review of applications is Thursday, March 20, 2003. Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Human Resources Office, 818 West 7th Street, 12th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017. EOE.

ACCOUNTANT - City of San Jacinto, CA. Salary: \$3,639-\$4,423 Month plus benefits. Maintain journals and General Ledgers, analytical reports, closings, RDA- HCD reports, budgets, Superv. exp. Requires knowledge of GAAP, GASB. Apply: 201 E. Main St., San Jacinto, CA 92583, (909) 654-7337, ext. 249. Deadline Open until filled.
www.sanjacintoca.us

FINANCE DIRECTOR - City of Woodland, CA. Salary: \$73,248 - \$93,396 DOQ. The City of Woodland seeks an experienced professional to provide executive leadership to the Finance Department. The ideal candidate must be committed to directing the City's fiscal operations and to provide a framework for financial planning and analysis. Responsibilities include accounting, treasury management, revenue and licensing, capital management, redevelopment finance, information systems, purchasing and stores and risk management. Serves as the City Treasurer. Ideal candidates should have five years of work experience in governmental and/or financial management or a related field, with at least three years of responsible administrative/management experience. Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance or a related field is required, with a Master's degree preferred. Requires possession of a valid California Driver's License. The City of Woodland provides a full range of local government services to its 50,000 residents under the Council-Manager form of government. This position will be appointed by the City Manager. Call the City of Woodland at (530) 661-5811 to obtain a job announcement. Send letter of interest and resume, with salary history, to City of Woodland, Human Resources Department, 300 First Street, Woodland, CA 95695 by final filing deadline of 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 2, 2003. Excellent benefits package with City paid PERS.

ACCOUNTANT - City of Pismo Beach, CA. \$39,644 - 48,188. The Accountant performs a variety of professional accounting duties and provides technical and analytical support to management. Requires a Bachelor's degree with major course work in accounting and two years professional experience. To receive an application call (805) 473-5358 or e-mail mcutting@pismobeach.org. Deadline is 5:00 p.m., May 9, 2003

Up the Ladder

BUSINESS SERVICES MANAGER—

Central Marin Sanitation Agency, San Rafael, CA. Salary: \$6,760 to \$8,213 monthly. Contact: Georg Krammer at gkrammer@koffassociates.com Website: www.koffassociates.com Deadline: April 18, 2003. CMSA is a Joint Powers Authority and WW Treatment Plant serving the cities of San Rafael, Larkspur, Corte Madera, San Quentin Prison and Ross Valley. The Agency's total budget is \$8MM; its average dry weather flow is 8 MGD; maximum 120 MGD. The Business Services Manager will function as the CFO and HR Director, supporting all Agency financial and HR activities. Requirements include a BS in accounting, economics, business or public administration; advanced degree and CPA desirable; minimum 3 years public sector finance and HR supervisory/administrative experience.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE—

City of Concord, CA. The City of Concord (pop. 121,000), located in the San Francisco Bay Area, is seeking a new Director of Finance to replace the current Director who is retiring after 13 years of service with the City. Concord, with approximately 525 employees and a total budget of \$151 million, is a full service city and a very active Redevelopment Agency (RDA). The Director reports to the City Manager and is a key member of the executive team. The Department provides the full range of finance related services including budget, financial forecasting, accounting, revenue administration, and purchasing. The Department's resources include a staff of 26 and a budget of \$16.7 million. The ideal candidate will be a visionary leader able to guide the City's financial future. Candidates should be seasoned finance professionals with significant leadership experience in a diverse and complex public organization. Candidates should have a high level of competence in all areas of financial management, as well as excellent communication and consensus building skills. Typical candidates include finance executives from complex public organizations, and senior outside advisors/consultants with strong financial management skills. Bachelor degree required; advanced degree desired. Salary range up to \$136,481 annually with variable pay component, which can provide up to 12% of salary and an attractive management benefit package, including 2.5% @ 55 CalPERS retirement and retiree medical coverage. Detailed brochure available. To be considered for this exceptional career opportunity, submit your resume, a cover letter with current salary, and three work-related references by Friday, April 25, 2003 to: John Shannon, Shannon Executive Search, 241 Lathrop Way, Sacramento, CA 95815, Tel: (916) 263-1401, Fax: (916) 561-7205, Email: resumes@cps.ca.gov, Website: www.cps.ca.gov/shannon

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**HELP
WANTED**

How Can I Advertise?

Email your classified job ad to Tawni Escudero at tescudero@cacities.org (rich text or plain text format only). The charge to advertise is \$8.00 per 40-character line. Please also include billing information, or indicate if you wish to pay via credit card. Ads must be received by the 25th of each month for the next month's insertion.

A Time to Speak Out

(continued from page 4)

cacy Policy of opposing legislation that "...Have implications for or threaten the stability of local government finance", on February 22, 2003, the Board of Directors of the CSMFO met in Sacramento and adopted the following positions on issues that were deemed to be particularly significant:

1. SB 100 (Dunn) Public Employees' Retirement, Local Safety Member Benefits: The CSMFO board opposes this and any similar measure that would enhance benefits packages, since local governments are facing budget crises and would have to cut services to fund increased benefits.
2. State Budget and Motor Vehicle License Fees: The CSMFO board opposes removing the state backfill to local government on the VLF holiday granted car owners by the State in the late 1990s. CSMFO would support restoration of the VLF to its original level with the same distribution formula that was in place at the time of the reduction.
3. Shift of Redevelopment Funds Proposed in State Budget: The CSMFO opposes any shift of local property taxes, including redevelopment funds, without the broader discussion of fiscal reform.
4. AB 1221 (Steinberg and Campbell) Property Taxation: The discussion of trading sales tax revenues is premature without a broader discussion of fiscal reform. The CSMFO opposes any such shift without a comprehensive discussion of fiscal reform and requests a seat at the table when fiscal reform is addressed.

The CSMFO board took this position because it believes that these positions will help maintain the sound fiscal management of our local governments. As additional issues arise, the board will consider them on a regular basis and will not hesitate to take a position when our interests are involved.

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