



NEWS LINE

OCTOBER, 2009

Doing More with Nothing?

- Jim Dahl, 2009-10 SUGA President

“Doing more with nothing!” A phrase jokingly coined by SunGard Public Sector President, Tom Huber, in his 2009 SUGA demonstration on SunGard future technologies. As Tom demonstrated a truly innovative graphical interface, he talked of the ever increasing need to “do more with less”, and joked that we are sometimes asked to do more with nothing.

I’m not sure that this term is so far off the mark. I increasingly see this expectation in the area of employee training. When the economy is tight, one of the first items cut from budgets is employee training and travel. We are in a time of government hiring freezes, and unprecedented government employee lay off. With this decrease in staffing we are also expected to maintain service levels to our citizens, who deserve the best we can give them.

As pointed out by SUGA Secretary, Pam Brown, the SunGard software applications we use are touched by us each and every working day. These computerized systems are what allow us to maximize services to our deserving citizens. Whether it be telecom operators, accountants, clerks, fire personnel, or police officers on the street in order to efficiently and effectively serve the public we need well trained staff. Without knowledgeable fingers on the keyboard we will cease to function efficiently.

Yes, we have all been asked to do more with less, and I believe we all understand to need to increase efficiencies, limit staff, and limit spending. However, with our requirement to serve our citizens to the best of our ability and with our requirement to function with smaller staffing, we can no longer afford to perform with inefficiencies. Doesn’t this make proper staff training more important than it has ever been? Doesn’t this require our employees to be as knowledgeable as possible about the computerized systems they use every day? Can we realistically expect our staffs to pick up the slack left behind, without offering them the best in training opportunities? If we offer our staff members anything less, aren’t we actually asking them to “do more with nothing”? ■



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Year End Financial Status

- Anthony Sorce, President Elect; Valerie Broxson, Treasurer

As the outgoing SUGA Treasurer and in collaboration with our new incoming Treasurer, Valerie Broxson, I would like to take this opportunity to give all SUGA members a summary of our financial position. To recap information presented at the annual business lunch, we generally look at our budget in two parts. The first is the yearly administrative revenues and expenses generated from day to day operations. The revenues generated for this part of the budget comes from the \$195 annual membership fee each member organization or individual is required to pay. The second is the revenues and expenses generated by the annual conference each year. The revenues generated for the conference part of the budget comes from the \$395 conference fee each attendee pays. Based on projected membership and conference attendance we were projecting a loss for fiscal year 2009 of approximately \$37,800. The financial presentation given at the business lunch gave everyone a snapshot of our financial position at the end of April, 2009. In addition to the previously mentioned budgeted loss, we were also projecting an additional loss due to a lack of conference registrations. The projected shortfall in attendance was due to the economic slowdown and its impact on the conference contract guarantees that were negotiated 3 years prior.

How our Conference Costs and Contracts Work

We contract Hotel space 3 to 4 years in advance to guarantee SUGA meeting and room space at the conference site and therefore have to project attendance.

- A. We project attendance based on past venues and membership totals
Projected 2009 conference attendance 1,300 Actual attendance 650
- B. We have to guarantee certain Food and Beverage dollar amounts.
 - 1. If we do not meet the dollar amount guaranteed we must pay for the difference in what we guaranteed and what we actually spend. This conference we were about \$70,000 short. That means we would have to actually spend about \$90,020 to meet the deficit due to lack of attendance.

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SAVE THE DATE!!

2010 SUGA CONFERENCE
May 23 (early reg.) - May 27, 2010





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- C. We also have to guarantee the number of rooms that will be used so that the hotel reserves enough rooms for our attendees.
 1. If these rooms are not used we have to pay the cost of the room \$139 plus tax and service fee's. This conference we calculated that we were going to be approx. \$122,000 short due to the lack of attendance.

There are many conditions and changes that were made to our guarantees to the hotels we contract with but there is a limit as to how low we can actually reduce our contracted guarantees.

What we did to try to limit our loss exposure

1. Reopened contract with the RIO and negotiated an additional 10% lower range on the room block thus lowering our liability for unused room nights
2. Lowered our penalty for room pricing from \$139 plus tax to \$60 plus tax for each unused room night
3. Negotiated the original food and beverage guarantee from \$395,000 down to \$270,000 which left us with the \$90,020 shortfall mentioned above.
4. Changed our AV provider of 13 years to a new vendor which should save approximately \$25,000. We actually did not hire an AV company until late March.
5. Asked our PC equipment provider to lower their price and saved about \$3,000 to \$4,000.

Additional steps to which helped cover our food and beverage shortfall

We needed to find ways to spend money to cover the food and beverage guarantee without paying the extra tax and service charges. The alternative would be to just hand over \$70,000 to the RIO to make up for the short fall in our food and beverage spending.

- We sold tickets to buy beverages for only the tax and service charge fee's Instead of \$4 or \$5 for each beverage that members normally would pay to the hotel.
- Offered spouses, family or friends of attendees the ability to attend our lunches during the week at a price of \$9 for a box lunch and \$12 for the sit down lunch.
- Last, we just could not cover all the food and beverage deficit so rather that just give the money to the RIO we scheduled free breakfasts for attendees on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The cost was approximated at \$45,000 plus an additional \$12,000 to \$13,000 cost to SUGA in taxes and service charges.

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- We sent emails to each regional board asking that they encourage their members to attend our international conference.
- SunGard held its annual employee appreciation reception at the hotel which counted towards our food and beverage minimum.
- West and MidWest Regions held receptions at the hotel which also counted toward our group food and beverage minimum.

All of the above steps helped reduce our potential liability. In the end, instead of a loss in excess of \$200,000 we will lose in the neighborhood of \$130,000 this fiscal year. Because we have built up our reserves in years past this loss will not cripple our operation but did use up a significant amount of our reserves since we had to cash in and use one of our investments in the amount of \$100,000.

I want to personally thank our board of directors, meeting management firm and especially SunGard and our Regional Groups for recognizing and responding to the financial dilemma we found ourselves in because of the economic downturn. The reaction it caused throughout the country especially in regards to government travel policies could not be foreseen 3 years ago when we entered into the 2009 conference contract.

Lastly, because of this past fiscal year and the outlook for the near future we need to look at additional ways to protect our organizations financial future. We need to ensure that SUGA will be able to provide support, communication vehicles and educational opportunities for our members in the years to come. In August we held our yearly board meeting and 2010 conference planning session. After going over future contracts and budgeting numbers for fiscal year 2010 the board voted to keep membership dues at \$195. Additionally we found it necessary to raise conference registration fee's from the current \$395 to \$410 to meet budget projections for 2010. The last conference fee increase was for our 2005 conference. Even with this latest conference fee increase the fee charged for our conference will still be one of the lowest national organizational conference fees by far. It has been a pleasurable and sometimes difficult time serving as the SUGA Treasurer these past 3 years. I would like to thank you for your understanding and support. We are in capable hands with our new Treasurer Valerie Broxson and I look forward to serving as the SUGA President-Elect in the coming year.

If you have any comments or questions please feel free to contact me at (412) 243-6237 or asorce@wpjwa.com ■



NEWS LINE

Summer Board Meeting Summary - Jim Dahl, President

On August 14 – 16 the SUGA Board held our 2009 Summer Board Meeting. As always the meeting was held at the location of the next Training Conference (Orlando). The full board attended with representatives from SunGard Public Sector, and our conference planner from M&AMS, Inc. We also met with representatives from the hotel's conference center. Many topics were covered. However, the four main topics centered around SUGA's Financial Status, the 2010 Training Conference, the ER process, and SUGA Goal Setting. The following is a brief summary of each topic:

- **Financial Status** – The 2009/2010 budget was discussed and modified, and will be voted on at the board's September conference call. Though we did take a large financial hit in 2009, the SUGA organization remains sound. There was a decrease in reserves, but sufficient reserves are available for future growth. For more details on SUGA's financial status please read President Elect, Anthony Sorce's article in this news letter.
- **2010 Training Conference** – Many attendees at the 2009 conference in Las Vegas made excellent suggestions for training classes that could improve the value of training offered, as did respondents to the attendee survey, and users of ListServs. All suggestions were discussed at length. When the 2010 agenda is released you will be glad to see that many of your suggestions were adopted.
- **ER Process** – Though details are not yet available, ER process improvement was discussed. There will be some outstanding changes made to make the entire process more efficient. Please see Member-at-Large, Dan Owens' article on approved version 7.0 and 8.0 enhancements.
- **SUGA Goal Setting** – The SUGA board's main 2009/2010 goal is to improve communication with current members, and marketing to potential members.



“ The SUGA Board's main 2009/10 goal is to improve communication with current members, and marketing to potential members “

Throughout the three days the fact that we are operating with your funds was at the forefront of all meeting attendees, and we did our utmost to minimize costs and eliminate all unnecessary meeting expenditures. I would like to thank all who attended for their efforts on behalf of SUGA. The SUGA Board meeting was extremely productive, and the board is poised to deliver a successful 2010. ■



NEWS LINE

New SUGA Website Update **- Steve Jones, Past President**

The new SUGA web site is under development with an anticipated go live date of Dec 31, 2009. We have selected a template and will start adding content soon. The new web site will have user forums, blogs, and other tools for the SUGA Board and the regional boards to easily and effectively communicate to various affinity groups. We are excited and eagerly anticipating this web site with a fresh new look and some contemporary tools of communication to the SUGA membership. ■



Application Coordinator = “AC” **- Brenda Wener, Member-at-Large**

If you have ever attended a SUGA International Conference, a regional conference, or have participated in the SUGA discussion groups, you may have heard the term “AC” and wondered what an AC is, and what do they do?

An Application Coordinator, or AC, is a SunGard user that volunteers their time to assist SunGard Product Manager(s) with the Enhancement Request (ER) process. For an AC to be chosen, the individual should meet several qualifications:

- Attend, if possible, the International SUGA Conference
- Be a daily user of the application that they will assist with
- Be willing to spend around 2-3 hours per week reviewing and updating enhancement requests
- Be willing to work with the Product Manager and end users to resolve issues
- Be functionally proficient in the application that they will assist with

SunGard OSSI Enhancement Voting **-Pam Brown, Secretary**

As I write this article, the voting process for the SunGard OSSI product line is underway. As of the publication of this article, the voting will be done. I hope that each agency took advantage of this opportunity to participate in this process. The OSSI team works to earn back as many of your “Enhancement Dollars” as they can, and they strive to do so by implementing a combination of the highest ranking enhancements and those that otherwise add value to the OSSI product line. Keep an eye on the client portal at www.myossi.com to see the outcome of the voting process. The goal is to have as many of these completed by the 2010 International Users Group Educational Conference being held in Orlando, Florida May 23-27, 2010. I hope to see you in Orlando so that we can see what is new for our products together! ■

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Application Coordinator = “AC” - Now is the time to volunteer! **- Brenda Wener, Member-at-Large**

In October, an email is sent to those users that have expressed in interest in being an AC requesting approximately 25 volunteers to work with 36 SunGard Applications. Of course, any user that might be interested in being an AC, please let me know. The volunteers are then paired with application(s) and product manager(s). The ACs begins reviewing and updating the enhancement request(s) on a weekly basis, which consists of reading each ER, answering the following questions and resolving issues appropriately.

- Is the ER written so that voters can easily understand the request?
If not, the AC is responsible for contacting the user, clarifying the purpose of the request, and writing an additional description of the request in the AC portion of the enhancement request.
- Is the ER already available in a current version of SunGard?
If the ER is already included in a later version, the AC informs the user and closes the ER.
- Is the ER a support issue?
If the ER is a support issue, then the AC informs the user and removes the ER from the vote process.
- Is the ER a duplicate?
If the ER is a duplicate, then the AC removes the request from the list of ER's.
- Did the user put more than one request in the same ER?
If the ER has more than one request, the AC closes the ER and creates new ER's for each request.
- Is the ER ready for the Product Manager?
Once the ER is ready, the ER is marked “Ready for Product Manager” and the AC is done with that ER.

Once these requests have all been marked as “Ready for the Product Manager”, the AC has completed their part in the ER process. ACs must have all of the ER's in “Ready for the Product Manager” status by March of the following year. This process can be quite large for some ACs due to the number of enhancement requests entered by both end users and SunGard staff.

At the International SUGA Conference, the AC is requested to attend the “Did you know...?” and “Product Enhancement” sessions for their application(s). The AC will then provide feedback to the SUGA Board about the effectiveness of the sessions provided for their assigned applications.

In return for the dedication and hard work that each AC provides, their International SUGA conference fee is paid for by the SUGA organization.

The enhancement process would not be possible without the work done by the ACs. Thank you! If you should meet an AC at any event, please take the time to thank them for their hard work.

If you would like to volunteer to be an AC, please contact Brenda Wener
bwener@centralsan.org ■



NEWS LINE

The Enhancement Request—a Benefit of Your Membership! **- Dan Owens, Member-at-Large**

Not every software company you deal with let's you have a voice in their overall product enhancement strategy. Membership in SUGA gives you just that... a voice to help determine what enhancements Sungard Public Sector (SPS) will program into the products your organization uses. And the best part...enhancement requests that get approved are done at no cost to your organization!

Version 7.0

In August 2009, SUGA received the list of completed enhancements from Sungard PS to be included in the upcoming 7.0 release. Version 7 is currently in beta and should move to general availability by the middle of November this year.

These enhancements, along with other features added by SPS, will be available for viewing during the Regional Users Group (RUG's) throughout this year and next. All enhancements are available for viewing on the www.mynaviline.com website.

Version 8.0

We also received a list of 100 enhancement requests to be scheduled for version 8.0. Of the 100, 65 were for Public Administration and 35 are Public Safety and Justice. You can view the list of enhancements for version 8.0 on the mynaviline website. Version 8.0 is scheduled for a Spring of 2011 release.

Enter Your Enhancement Request Today!

Got a great idea for an enhancement? Don't wait...enter it today!

Simply go to www.mynaviline.com

Log in, click on the link for instructions to enter a ER request and follow the instructions.

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The Enhancement Request *(continued from page 8)*

An Enhancement to the Enhancement Request Process?

The SUGA Board is working with Sungard Public Sector to improve our ER process as we welcome new organizations from SunGard into SUGA. The new process we are reviewing is designed to incorporate and mesh our various ER process into one beneficial process for everyone. Once we have more definitive information we will keep you informed about our progress in this newsletter. ■



NEWS LINE

Volunteers—The True Heroes of SUGA **- Steve Jones, Past President**

The SUGA organization is run by engaged and enthusiastic (ok – mostly enthusiastic) volunteers. We, as members of this organization owe them all a big, collective “Thank You”.

If you are new to this organization you will see and hear terms such as AC’s, User Led’s, ER’s and Lab monitors. I will try to explain what these acronyms stand for.

The ACs or Application Coordinators are an integral component to the SunGard Product Enhancement Request (ER) process. This ER process is how we, the SUGA membership, speak with one voice to SunGard and express what we want to have improved in their products. AC’s are the collectors of all the ER requests made by all the organizations and are the ones that vet the requests and organize these into a system that makes it easier for the rest of us to understand. Oh, by the way only SUGA members in good standing can participate in this process. For their efforts we offer ACs free conference registration to the international conference.

User Leds are folks like you and I that have a desire to share their wisdom with the rest of us. They make presentations at the regional and/or international conferences and offer insight into real world use of SunGard products and in ideas that help their organizations operate better. In the past user led presenters have received software maintenance credit for their organization which helps their company save money. However, this model is being reviewed and an updated incentive will be forthcoming.

Lab Monitors assist us by managing the hands-on instructional labs that are offered at all the conferences. These labs fill up quick and seats are always in demand, especially for the no-shows. The lab monitors are part of the corps of conference volunteers that truly make our conferences work and function smoothly.

Some of the other needs for conference volunteers:

- Conference Setup and Pre-registration
- Registration During the Week
- Business Lunch - Election Vote Collection and Tabulation



In closing, the SUGA Board hopes you find value in our membership and that you can attend a conference this year. We are always open to suggestions and ideas to improve this organization. If you have time – please volunteer at the next conference. For more information please visit our web site: www.huginc.org. ■

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NEWS LINE

Member Spotlight—Dell Perry City of Plano, Texas



Do you know Dell Perry? If you don't, you have missed having the wonderful experience of knowing a dynamic person. If you do know her, you know of her commitment and dedication to this user's group and her passion for User-Led presentations. Later in the article, just a few of her accomplishments in this organization will be highlighted. First, how did she get here and where is she headed?



Dell was born in Connecticut and moved to Texas when she was nine years old. At a young age, Dell's learning aptitudes were shining through and she was chosen for an experimental program for advanced placement in math, language, and science classes at school. Her interests were not all academic though. She was on the Drill Team when she was in junior high school. She attended Woodrow Wilson High School in Dallas, Texas where she was a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish Honor Society. Her career aspiration



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Dell Perry *(continued from page 11)*

was to become a veterinarian and attend Texas A&M University. While working on her undergraduate classes at Tarleton State College, she needed to take a math class to meet some requirements. Everything was full except for a class called FORTRAN IV. She describes it as “the madness began”. Her dream of being a veterinarian got lost, and she became enthralled in this new technology and describes it as “solving a gigantic puzzle”. Her first job was at Fidelity Union Life Insurance Company and she learned the Report Program Generator (RPG) language.

Marriage and her husband’s military transfer took Dell to Alaska just in time for a big flood and plenty of work available doing records recovery-the manual way. After that an accounting firm realized Dell’s talents and began working with lots and lots of punch cards. After the Army, it was time to come back to Texas and Dell worked for companies writing systems in Autocoder, RPG and COBOL for payroll, accounting, inventory, point of sale, accounts payable and receivables. Her career with the City of Plano, Texas began in 1978 in the Data Processing Department. She inherited support for existing computer programs and systems and began writing a new utility billing and tax collections systems. Around 1992, Dell saw a demo from a company called HTE for Land Management. While the city did not opt to purchase the program, Dell sprung into action to design a land system because she really liked the concepts she saw. By 1995 the city did purchase some HTE software in the Land Management realm. Currently, she manages 7 SunGard Public Sector applications in both green screen and NaviLine as well as over 1500 custom programs, files, and modifications to the SPS applications. She likens the progression in technology in her career as going “from horse drawn buggies to moon landings”. An active member of the user’s group since 1997, Dell began conducting user-led presentations in 2002 and has presented multiple sessions at every South Central regional and International since. She says she has been given the dubious title of “the Query Queen” because of her special abilities in this realm. She served as the President of the South Central Regional group in 2008. Not known to be shy, she is a vocal advocate for users to become involved in the processes to implement upgrades and changes to existing applications.

This woman of diverse interests and experiences has decided that she will be retiring soon. She is an avid gardener and specializes in the growing of over 700 different iris varieties. A former bodybuilding champion, she enjoys a wide range of activities including home improvement projects, arts and crafts, and has demonstrated a strong commitment to Cub Scouts by being a leader for many years. Don’t play rap or hip-hop music when Dell is around, she much prefers the Rolling Stones and Beatles. Her energy and contributions to SUGA will be greatly missed when she leaves us, but we should keep our eyes open because she wants to audition for Survivor or the Amazing Race. As for her computer and technology world, Dell says she will leave that to the Gen-Xers and the Millennials. ■



NEWS LINE

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