

# SUGA News Line



SunGard Public Sector Users' Group Association

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## President's Message—Steve Jones

Did you know we have a new name? We have changed the name from HUG to SUGA – which stands for SunGard Public Sector Users' Group Association, Inc. This new name reflects changes that are happening to the HTE organization. The name the company goes by now is SunGard Public Sector. The SUGA name is meant to be more closely tied to the company whose software we all use. This is also meant to be inclusive of the recent merging of the OSS public safety organization's user group with HUG. You just got to love change! While we may no longer be HUG,

we have lots of HUG tradition to make SUGA even better - as we move forward with this great organization. SunGard Public Sector includes several other product platforms - to see the complete Public Sector product line of SunGard go to: <http://www.sungard.com/publicsector/>.

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual International Conference will be held in exciting Las Vegas, Nevada from May 12 through Friday, May 15, 2009. This will be the first international conference under the new users' group name of SUGA – SunGard Public Sector Users' Group Association,

Inc. Repeat after me: SUGA. Please note the conference starts on a Tuesday with sessions starting that morning. You will be receiving much more information about the upcoming conference in the mail and also on the web site: [www.huginc.org](http://www.huginc.org).

The theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> conference will be: SUGA and SunGard – It's a Winning Combination. Planning for the conference involves the SUGA Board of Directors, the Conference Planning Staff and SunGard Conference Staff. This group will be working through the year to make the 21<sup>st</sup> conference a

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### Special points of interest:

- OUR NAME HAS CHANGED. CHECK OUT ARTICLES ON THE REASONS WHY
- 21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE THEME— "SUGA AND SUNGARD- IT'S A WINNING COMBINATION"
- CHANGES CONTINUE TO BE MADE TO CONFERENCE CONTENT BASED ON YOUR FEEDBACK

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The name change from HUG to SUGA became effective August 1, 2008

SunGard Public Sector Users' Group Association

## New Sessions Well Received—Tino Anthony, Past President

Based upon our survey results and the many positive comments the board received during conference week it looks like our 2008 20<sup>th</sup> annual conference held in Orlando Florida was largely a success. Our attendance was a bit lower than expected but with the strain that our economy is placing on budgets these days an attendance of just under 1100 was very acceptable. One of your board's goals this year was to add some new session content. We accomplished this by placing on our agenda various training session dealing with the Microsoft product suite, which by the way were all very well attended. As a result you can expect to see more sessions at future conferences relating to not only, Microsoft but also in the area of providing certification training relating to disaster recovery processes, hierarchy and procedures (NIMS). Another training opportunity we are looking into is the possibility of providing topics geared towards the many operating systems and databases that we interact with on daily basis. If you have any suggestions related to adding new session content please forward them to me @ [tino.anthony@leesburgflorida.gov](mailto:tino.anthony@leesburgflorida.gov). We are looking forward to seeing you at the Rio in Las Vegas for the 21<sup>st</sup> annual SUGA conference.

## Our Name Has Changed—Valerie Broxson, Secretary

At the 2008 International Conference business lunch, the membership voted to change the name of the organization from HTE Users' Group (HUG) to SunGard Public Sector Users' Group Association (SUGA). The name change became effective on August 1, 2008.

This is just the start of some of the things that will be impacted by the International

Conference name change. The SUGA Board is currently in the process of looking for a new logo, changing the organizations name on the bank accounts, and processing the name change with the state of Florida.

Each of the RUGs at the regional conferences will also be voting on a new name. They will also be

impacted by the associated changes. The first of the name change votes for a RUG took place at the Midwest RUG which was held Sept. 14-17.

## Meet Our Newest Board Member

Brenda Wener, Member-at-Large

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, Martinez, California

Brenda has been a SunGard user for approximately 12 years, using BP, LX, CR and CX applications. She has worked at CCCSD for 16 years, almost as long as they have been a SunGard customer, and is currently an Engineering Assistant III. Brenda has volunteered at several conferences, and is now serving her first year as Member-at-Large.

Welcome to the SUGA Board, Brenda!

The newsletter has a new look to go with our new name! If you have suggestions on things you would like to see in the newsletter sent your comments to

# SUGA News Line

## Notes From The “Newbie” - Brenda Wener, Member-at-Large

I attended my first Board of Directors meeting on August 7-9, 2008 at Rio All-Suite Hotel, Casino and Conference Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, which is the location of the 2009 International Conference to be held May 12-15, 2009.

At the meeting I learned the SUGA Mission is:

- To promote free and open communication among SUGA members.
- To act as the forum for suggestions relating to revisions and enhancements of SunGard Public Sector Inc. application software packages, and development of new products.

- To promote coordination and cost sharing among SUGA members.

In attendance were the seven Board Members, representatives from SunGard Public Sector, and Meeting & Association Management Services. During three days of open and candid dialogue, we discussed Board assignments, the Treasurer's report and SUGA budget, ideas for website improvement; reviewed the survey results of the 2008 conference; and we brainstormed our ideas for a new logo. Goals for 2008-09 were set; we toured the conference center to view room layout for sessions, labs and

other classes; and decided the format and menu for the 2009 conference.

To quote Steve Jones, President, “we work hard, and we play hard”. The SUGA Board of Directors is a hard working, diverse group of people with the ability to laugh and have fun. I certainly enjoyed getting to know everyone and I am looking forward to serving as Member-at-Large and continuing to promote the goals of the SUGA Mission.

The SUGA name is meant to be more closely tied to the company whose software we all use.

## President's Message—continued

winning event for all of us. We will be adding more sessions concerning public safety and application training that affect all our organizations. Attendees can interact with SunGard partner vendors, over 100 SunGard staff, and thousands of SUGA organization peers. We have 20 plus years of history to build on. We are looking forward to returning to the Rio Resort and Conference Center for the first time since 2001 and are anticipating four days full of opportunities for networking, learning, and making new friends and acquaintances.

We also want to have some fun. The Rio offers a beautiful facility for the conference and your stay, with the added bonus of all the entertainment Las Vegas has to offer. With each guest room being a suite – you can be assured your stay will be comfortable. There is a free shuttle service to take hotel guests to “the strip” with drop off locations at the Rio's partner properties: Bally's, Caesars Palace, Flamingo, Harrah's, and Paris. And do not forget the SunGard reception – a must attend event.

Please make your plans to

join us at the Rio for a winning event – the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual International Conference. As always, we can use all volunteers as we can get, so if you have a few spare hours – please helps us out.

**See you at the Rio!**



2008-09 SUGA Board of Directors. From top left: Pam Brown, Jim Dahl, Brenda Wener, Anthony Sorce, Tino Anthony, Valerie Broxson, Steve Jones

## How We Pick Conference Locations—Jim Dahl, President Elect

The board is often asked why SUGA conferences are held at specific locations. At times the question is geared towards why we are in Orlando and Las Vegas as often as we are. There are several variables that go into selecting conference sites. Here is a description of the four largest considerations in selecting a conference location.

**Facility Logistics:** Each potential conference site is visited by staff from SunGard Public Sector and Meeting & Association Management Services, and if possible a board member. This visit is designed to determine if the site has adequate meeting space. There must be enough rooms available to accommodate each breakout session, and a ballroom large enough to accommodate our opening session and business luncheon. We also look at the conference center layout to ensure all meeting rooms are in the same general location within the facility.

If space considerations are met, SunGard Public Sector networking staff members determine if the hotel has adequate networking infrastructure. Each meeting room must have a sufficient number of network drops and electrical outlets. Preferably, each room will also have Internet access. If not, there must be enough Internet capable rooms of the correct size to accommodate sessions that require Internet access.

**Size of conference:** The SUGA conference usually attracts between 1,100 and 1,300 attendees. With the addition of OSSl users, we predict attendance will reach 1,600 within the next two years, and have set a goal of reaching 2,000 within the next five years. These numbers make us too big for most conference hotels, and the number of hotels that are capable of handling our conference are limited.

Yes, there are conferences much larger than ours in other cities. However, these are held in convention centers rather than conference hotels. This means many attendees are required to stay at off-site hotels and commute to the conference, which requires either renting a car or paying extensive taxi fees. Renting space in a convention center could potentially mean doubling conference registration, and potentially increasing overall costs by up to fifty percent.

**Venue:** The board recognizes the fact that we are all away from home, and when the conference day has ended we would like readily available entertainment. Therefore, venue and local attractions are important factors in the decision-making process, and important in drawing attendees to conference locations. Looking at conference trends over the past fourteen years, Orlando and Las Vegas have the highest attendance rates. On average these two locations have a 29% higher attendance rate than other cities.

**Cost:** The SUGA Board of Directors takes pride in keeping conference costs down. The cost of attending the SUGA conference is much lower than that of similar conferences. We try to negotiate the best possible room rates with hotels, and offer discounts through airlines and car rental agencies. Due to these efforts, the \$395.00 conference fee has not been increased in several years.

The SUGA Board of Directors in cooperation with SunGard Public Sector and Meeting & Association Management Services remain dedicated to providing you with the highest quality conference possible, while keeping your costs as low as possible. In pursuit of this goal, great effort is dedicated to conference site selection. Every aspect of a potential conference site is considered and analyzed for its ability to serve you, and offer you a quality educational experience as well as offer you after hours activities.

## Some Facts about Conventions in Las Vegas!

- Las Vegas is home to the majority of the top 200 conventions in North America
- Annually, over 6 million conventioners attend over 22,000 conventions in Las Vegas
- There are over 133,000 sleeping rooms in Las Vegas....that's more than Orlando, Los Angeles, or Chicago
- Las Vegas has 17 of the top 20 largest hotels in the United States
- McCarran (Las Vegas) International Airport has the 5th largest number of

## Badge Notes—Pam Brown, Member-at-Large

Based upon feedback from the attendees of the 2008 conference in Orlando, the addition of the Microsoft courses into the schedule was a great success. With this in mind, I have been tasked with presenting a list of Public Safety related courses that would be applicable to a wide range of Public Safety users. The trick is to find courses with content that would be

acceptable across most of the states to count toward training and licensing hours. NIMS (National Incident Management System) training is one possibility. The course offerings would be for the basic level trainings since the more specialized courses require extended classroom time. I welcome your input on this for future conference course content

and encourage you to email [pam.brown@cedarhilltx.com](mailto:pam.brown@cedarhilltx.com) with your comments and ideas. Thank you for a wonderful conference and see you in May 2009 at the Rio!

## So, why is SUGA going to Las Vegas for 2009?

- More rooms = better prices = less cost to our attendees!
- SUGA is so large it can now only fit in a few hotels in the country....more of which are in Las Vegas. So, unless we want to go to a convention center, which would mean we have to raise our registration fees, we have lots of choices in Las Vegas (again = less cost to attendees!)
- Tons of airline choices with lower fares = less cost to our attendees!

Give us your  
feed back on  
offering NIMS  
(National  
Incident  
Management  
System) at the  
next SUGA  
Conference

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