



Experience New Orleans... The food, the music, and the KFC CAB!

On December 9th and 10th, 2008, the Kansas City Financial Center (KFC) held its semi-annual Customer Advisory Board (CAB) meeting. The USDA – National Finance Center (NFC) Controller Operations Division (COD) was a co-host for the meeting which was held in New Orleans, Louisiana. Sixty three CAB members were in attendance representing twenty Federal program agencies.

The meeting opened with a welcome from CAB Chair Debbie Byrd (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and Vice-Chair Gloria Owens (Environmental Protection Agency- Research Triangle Park). KFC Regional Director, Gary Beets welcomed the CAB attendees and expressed his gratitude to USDA/ NFC/COD for co-hosting the event. Gary highlighted some of KFC's accomplishments for FY08:

- KFC issued 24,385.658 check and EFT payments totaling \$19,279,781.74
- PAM project successfully implemented their first release (SSI ACH monthly payments). The second release is on schedule for February 2009
- KFC just received new check enclosing equipment (Kerns)
- DFAS is considering using Treasury to disburse their payments
- HROC to KROC transition
- KFC received 100% customer satisfaction on the latest customer service survey



CAB Chairpersons,
Debbie Byrd and Gloria Owens

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Following introductions, the spring minutes were approved and the presentations began. Topics and speakers who presented on the first day of the meeting included:

USDA Welcome & Presentations – Charles Wallace, USDA, NFC, COD and Gary Millet, USDA, NFC, shared NFC's organizational structure, overall mission, and select accomplishments of their respective divisions.

Internet Payment Platform (IPP) – Teresa Ricoy, FRB Boston, provided a very informative presentation on the IPP and the benefits it provides to agencies.

HROC to KROC File Processing & Connectivity Changes – Denise Quirarte, FMS, KFC, presented on the transition of file processing and requisite connectivity of HROC to KROC.

The first day of the CAB concluded with the Regional Financial Center updates where KFC management highlighted specific accomplishments for the year. The meeting adjourned and was followed by a group tour of the National World War II Museum. The museum was dedicated in 2000 as the National D-Day Museum and is now designated by Congress as the country's official World War II Museum. CAB members young and old walked away with a better appreciation for the World War II era and the sacrifice men, women, and families of that generation experienced.



CAB Attendees in front of a reproduction of a Higgins Boat at the National

The agenda on the second day included:

Treasury Offset Program (TOP) – Alyssa Riedl, FMS, Debt Program Division, provided a very informative presentation on the TOP program.

Pay.gov – Marshall Henry, FMS, DC, provided a very detailed presentation on the Pay.gov system and the various services offered to Federal agencies.

International ACH Transaction (IAT) – Susan Robinson, FMS, KFC, provided a high level overview of IAT and explained the impact to our customer agencies.

Governmentwide Accounting (GWA) – Mike Norman, FMS, DC, provided an update on the Governmentwide Accounting and Reporting Modernization project.

American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) – Sandra Wilson, ABMC, shared a 10 minute video highlighting the American monuments overseas followed by a presentation of the history and background of ABMC.

After the presentations concluded, each CAB member gave an update about their respective agency. The meeting wrapped up with an open forum which allowed the CAB members to ask any unanswered questions. The CAB continues to be an excellent opportunity to interact with our customer agencies – all in an effort to build upon the exceptional service we strive to provide.

Pre-Authorized Debt Converted to Pay.gov



The Kansas City Financial Center (KFC) and the Financial Management Service's (FMS) Federal Finance are working to convert existing pre-authorized debit (PAD) customers from the legacy application to the newer FMS web-based Pay.gov application. Although the legacy system has served many customers throughout the years, Pay.gov promises to offer greater functionality for collection processing. The KFC and Pay.gov teams are working to transition 24 customer agencies by the end of Fiscal Year 2009.

Why Use Pay.Gov?	
Financial:	Fast and safe collection service at no cost to the agency
Technical:	Web-based, secure application available anywhere
Business:	Customizable for business and technical requirements
Service:	Comprehensive customer and technical support
Availability:	Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Pay.gov is designed to simplify PAD. Pay.gov is a secure, web-based, collections application offering agency users easier internet-based access, thereby eliminating the need for customer agencies to maintain these old and out-dated hardware systems for processing PAD transactions. Pay.gov also provides improved reporting tools that are built into the application, and a suite of other services. The newer functionality will enhance the collection processing capabilities available to Federal Agencies and includes the ability to collect both ACH and credit card transactions, use internet-based forms that citizens and businesses can access to submit information and initiate payments to agencies, as well as billing and reporting functionality not currently offered. Pay.gov has been developed to meet the FMS commitment to process collections electronically using Internet technologies and will help Federal Agencies comply with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act.

What can Pay.Gov provide?	
Collections:	ACH debit and credit card collection transactions
Billing:	Notify customers of due and facilitate collections online
Forms:	Forms to gather information and initiate collections.
Reporting:	Built-in reporting for transaction reconciliation

In March of 2009, Pay.gov added new Payer Profile functionality specifically designed to meet the needs of transitioning KFC customers. This new system feature allows Pay.gov to securely store customer profile data, including name and primary bank account information, allowing agency customers to quickly create ad-hoc transactions by accessing stored customer data. This feature is designed to reduce data entry errors and streamline the transaction entry process.

As of May 2009, seven agencies have already converted to processing PAD through Pay.gov – Department of Energy's Western Area Power Administration, General Services Administration's Kansas City Payroll, Homeland Security's U.S. Coast Guard Debt Collections, Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation Denver Repayment Agreements, three National Park Service offices (Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, and Grand Teton National Park), and U.S. Treasury Financial Management Service's Debt Management Services. If you have any questions about the conversion to Pay.gov, please contact either JoDee Devillier with Pay.gov at 202-874-6920 or by email at JoDee.Devillier@fms.treas.gov, or Walker Woods with the Kansas City Financial Center at 816-414-2117 or by email at walker.woods@fms.treas.gov.

Director's Editorial - Keeping up with the Jones'



There's an old saying here in Missouri that "if you don't like the weather wait 15 minutes because it will change". Well, it seems the same thing can be said about technology—"if you don't like the technology you have right now, wait 15 minutes and it will change!"

Just think about it: the video game you are playing started with "Pong" to Playstation to Xbox; movies on video started with discs or platters to the battle between VHS and BETA tapes to DVD and now we have HD/DVD and Blue Ray; even the televisions have evolved from simple black and white to color and now plasma/LED/LCD/DLP (no doubt I've missed some); the computer you are using—desktop versus laptop, Apple vs. Mac, what operating system do I use, how do I keep it secure; from tin types to 35 MM cameras to digital cameras; from transistor radios to Bose sound systems; MP3 Players, iPods, iPhones, phones that take pictures, phones that send text messages, BlackBerries; the Internet; MySpace, Facebook, WEB pages, blogs, wikis, twitter pages, and tweets!!!! Well I think you get the idea by now! It's seemingly endless and ever changing; and we're all competing with our next-door neighbor to see who can have the latest, greatest gadget or have our face and/or ideas/opinions sent to people around the world at the touch of a button.

Don't get me wrong; it's not that I'm against change or technology because much of it adds value either in our personal lives or in the business place. I just wonder at times whether WE as a society are managing the technology we use or whether the technology (or actually the people that design the technology) is managing us. When there is an expectation for a new toy (techno gadget) to be released, we set up tents outside Walmart or BestBuy waiting for the store to open so that we can rush in and become the very first on our block to proudly sport one. And at the price tags this new technology typically bears, we must mortgage the house or put up the first born as collateral just so that we can have this prized possession!

And then once we have it, we have to figure out how to "interface" it with our old technology! So we create a quandary for ourselves: Do we upgrade the old stuff? Do we throw it away and acquire new interfacing systems and gadgets? The people who design this stuff always seem to find a way to introduce some new feature or systems/hardware requirement to make our old stuff obsolete. It's faster, sleeker, got more pixels, stores more information—like 10,000 songs (really, who needs 10,000 songs?), and more applications to help you get through the day (my, how did our forefathers ever get by) just to name a few of the marketing gimmicks. And we swallow it hook, line, and sinker!

With this mind set of “gotta have it” which is further exacerbated by the “now that I have it what do I do with it”; I can’t help but think we add yet another level of stress to our already stressful lives. The ironic thing about it is this; we as a society have convinced ourselves (maybe with a little help from the people that design and market this stuff) that all this technology somehow makes our lives a little less stressful. We get that notion because the new gadgetry is marketed as a time saver and that it is more convenient. I’m not so sure but what we haven’t simply traded one stressor for another.

Then there is the exploding new kinds of “social networking services” that are becoming available. You have Facebook, MySpace, blogging, wikis, twitters, and tweets! Why it’s simply passé these days to send someone a text message; anybody that wants to be “hip” these days needs to be “tweeting”!

My family celebrated Mother’s Day recently and we got into one of those big family discussions about all the social networking services and it quickly became clear where the line in the sand was drawn. For the few in our family that were in the Silent Generation, they simply saw no value whatsoever in the array of social networking services. Then came the Baby Boomer generation which were into the Internet, cell phones, and text messaging but not much beyond that. Then we had our Millennial generation which fully embraced the myriad of networking services to the degree that I’m not sure they could even see that life could exist without Facebook. So, as it turns out it’s largely a generational thing. It’s a byproduct of the era in which we grew up and the technology that we were exposed to.

What we end up with is a society that is more reliant upon electronic forums and avenues to transact our social interactions. This is true for both personal and business environments. I converse more with my own son now via telephone text messages than orally or in a personal conversation. Take a look at your own business environment and I would suspect that the majority of your social interaction with peers, superiors, and subordinates is via text messages. We sit in our offices and can run an entire organization without ever having to leave the comfort of our desk.

Now, before you get the idea that I am a cave dweller, let me say for the record that I am not necessarily opposed to new technology or the new social networking services. However, rather than automatically buying into everything that is introduced as the newest and greatest would be to assess what makes sense for us as an individual or as a business. Use only what brings value and don’t become dependent upon it as the only means of communication. When we (personal or business) determine what adds value and how we will use it we are managing that technology. In spite of all the technology and social networking services that are available now, there is still nothing better than the “personal touch” for some things. It comes down to balance—the right mix of technology complimented by real interpersonal interaction—whether it be in our personal lives or at the workplace.



Regional Director

PAM Checks are in the Mail



On February 21, 2009 the PAM project team along with all the Regional Financial Center's (RFC's) gathered to await the arrival of the monthly SSI file. That month's file was different, it contained 2.7 million checks that needed to be printed, cleared, wrapped and ready for delivery by February 24th... in four short days. Not only is February a short production month, but the SSI check files were being processed through the PAM application for the first time!



PAM Team awaits arrival of the monthly SSI files

Each RFC worked extremely hard to prepare for this production run. There were a lot of meetings to attend, decisions to be made, and ITIM accounts to be created. To prepare for the newest release of the PAM application, which now spans across all RFC's, takes a very dedicated staff to succeed. Each RFC succeeded in identifying production staff, completing paperwork for PAM i-keys, setting up workstations and attending training.



KFC PAM Training

Just-in-time training was provided to each RFC utilizing a Webex application that allowed personnel at each RFC to be trained on the PAM application just a few days prior to the receipt of the production files.

With everyone ready to go, on Saturday, February 21st a "Command Center" was set-up at the Kansas City Regional Financial Center. Each RFC called in and monitored the receipt of the SSI monthly production files. At approximately noon central time the 72 SSI

check files with the 2.7 million checks arrived and each RFC was given the green light to proceed with printing of the checks. The result was a successful production run with SSI recipients receiving their checks once again, "On time, Every time!"

The year leading up to this successful production run could not have been possible without all of the dedication and hard work by PAM staff members including FMS Project Management, FRB Project Management, Information Resources, Business Requirements, Software Development, User Acceptance Testing, Quality Assurance Testing, Agency/Interface Testing and the Social Security Administration.

With more than 30 legacy applications to convert to PAM, there are many more victories ahead of us, and we will be sure to succeed with those too!



KFC Staff monitored the receipt of the SSI files

INSERTING CHANGE - THE KERN 3000

For over 40 years, the Check Wrapping System (CWS) has been the primary piece of equipment for counting and enclosing Treasury checks at the Kansas City Regional Financial and Operations Center (KFC/KROC), however, those days are ending. CWS equipment is no longer manufactured, therefore parts are difficult to obtain, even for routine maintenance. In November 2008, KFC/KROC received a high speed inserting piece of equipment, the Kern 3000, located in the Payment Management Operations Branch (PMOB). The first priority of the new equipment will consist of processing the daily Social Security Administration (SSA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) files.

KEY K3000 FEATURES

- Bar code readers provide accountability and ensure sequence of checks throughout the process
- Inserts checks into pre-manufactured envelopes
- Capable of adding envelope inserts and printing on the outside of envelopes
- Generates custom reports to track production and system status
- Up to 26,000 mail pieces per hour
- Variable processing speeds
- Reduced service costs and on site maintenance
- Unique modular design
- Vertical conveyor
- Easy operator programming



Lorne Rush operates the K3000 during testing.

PMOB anticipates receiving another K3000 and a K3500 before long. The K3500 has many of the same features as the K3000 and includes several upgrades. Specifically, the K3500 has the ability to accommodate letter matching to checks and will insert both items into a single envelope. The Kern equipment is a welcome addition to KFC/KROC and better positions us to accommodate contingency processing and entertain new business opportunities.

Randy Brown, PMOB Manager, stated, "The operators have been trained and have learned quickly, and even though KFC/KROC has changed machinery, we still have the best people. In short, the best people will lead to the best production."

Did you know...

The U.S. Debit Card - Another Alternative

The U.S. Debit Card is a program sponsored by the United States Department of the Treasury Financial Management Service and is managed by JP Morgan. The program gives federal agencies the ability to deliver funds through debit cards and provides an electronic alternative to checks, drafts, and imprest funds. The debit card is secure and maintains strict management controls. It provides users convenient access to funds and program administrators access to various reporting tools.

Common uses of the US Debit Card:

- Temporary payrolls
- Stipends
- Imprest funds
- Overseas travel



Key features and benefits:

- Rapid and low-risk start up for bulk and individual account opening capability
- Online, real-time funding, and 24-hour access to cardholder account information
- Access at ATMs and merchants worldwide
- Accepted by retailers for purchasing worldwide

To obtain more information about the U.S. Debit Card program visit: <http://www.fms.treas.gov/debitcard/index.html>

Where to look...

Understanding TAS – BETC

The Government-wide Accounting (GWA) Modernization initiative will require Federal agencies to more accurately utilize the new Treasury Account Symbol (TAS) and Business Event Type Code (BETC) to classify transactions as early as calendar year 2011.

Key resource sites:

http://www.fms.treas.gov/gwa/ref_guidance.html This site provides the new component-based GWA TAS-BETC format and requirements, along with several links under the heading 'GWA Reporting'.

<https://www.sam.gov/sampublic/> This site provides a listing of all valid TAS - BETC combinations under the heading 'GWA Reference Data'.

<http://www.fms.treas.gov/sps/index.html> This site provides a brief description of the SPS changes for GWA TAS -BETC, along with several helpful links under the heading 'Reference Material on TAS - BETC for Payments'.

We encourage you to subscribe through the FMS website to be notified of any updates:

<http://www.fms.treas.gov/scripts/subscription/>

<http://www.fms.treas.gov/scripts/subscription/?Act=update>