

The Kansas City Dispatch

KFC CAB: CELEBRATING 15 YEARS



On December 4 - 5, 2007, the Kansas City Financial Center (KFC) hosted its semi-annual Customer Advisory Board (CAB) meeting in Kansas City at the Harrah's Hotel. Ninety-four CAB members representing thirty Federal Program Agencies (FPA) attended the meeting. This meeting marked a milestone for KFC. Not only was it the largest CAB attendance turnout, but KFC also celebrated the CAB's 15 - year anniversary.

To celebrate, KFC recognized 7 customer agencies that have been active since the first CAB in 1991 and presented each with a token of appreciation. Those agencies were: Environmental Protection Agency (Las Vegas, NV), Department of Commerce - National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (Kansas City, MO), General Services Administration (Kansas City, MO), United States Coast Guard (Topeka, KS), United States Department of Agriculture - National Finance Center (New Orleans, LA), United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development (St. Louis, MO) and Social Security Administration (Baltimore, MD). Much to his surprise, KFC Regional Director Gary Beets received a token of appreciation from KFC Deputy Director Susan Robinson that recognized him for his leadership and dedication to the Kansas City Financial Center CAB. She noted that Gary's continued vision for the CAB has been directly responsible for its success. A special CAB 15 - year Coaster Stone was given to meeting attendees and the CAB meeting was started with a slide show presentation highlighting the CAB through the last 15 years.

After the 15th anniversary commemoration, the meeting started with CAB Chairman Joe Vitale (USDA - NFC) welcoming the guests and commending the large turnout for this notable CAB. Gary Beets also welcomed the attendees and commented that the average CAB meeting has around 60 attendees, and he was very pleased with the large turnout of nearly 100 people. Gary was also pleased to recognize Judy Tillman, FMS Deputy Commissioner, at the CAB meeting and announced that Judy would become the new FMS Commissioner on January 4, 2008. Gary reviewed some of KFC's accomplishments for fiscal year 2007:

- 238 million check and EFT payments equaling \$190 billion
- 36,000 foreign payments equaling \$278 million
- 10.5 million PAD transactions equaling \$3.5 billion in collections.
- KFC's disbursements were 100% on time and 99.9% accurate.

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Introductions were given in a round-table format with each guest providing their name and agency. The spring minutes were approved and the presentations began. Topics and speakers who presented on day one of the meeting included:

FMS Priorities - Judy Tillman, FMS Deputy Commissioner, provided an informative presentation on the strategic directives/goals for Fiscal Year 2008.

Fed Debt 101 - Scott Spell and Juanita Franklin (FMS, BDMOC) provided a high level overview of the Fed Debt System.

DMS Training Services - Denise Hammond and Stephanie Anderson (FMS, DC) provided an overview of training available on debt collection, TOP, and TROR.

Who to Talk to at KFC - Ethan Cole provided an overview of each branch at KFC, their sections, employees, and responsibilities.

Day one of the CAB concluded with Kansas City Financial Center updates highlighting each branch's accomplishments for the year. A tour of the Kansas City Financial Center was provided and was followed by a cake and punch reception.

Day two consisted of a full day of presentations that included:

International Terrorism - Mark Randol, DHS, highlighted past instances of international terrorism and discussed the history of terrorism throughout the world.

Governmentwide Accounting (GWA) - Mike Norman (FMS, DC) provided a detailed and informative update on the Government Wide Accounting and Reporting Modernization project.

Payments Application Modernization (PAM) - Jesse Chavez and Lisa Ford (FRB Kansas City) provided the status of the PAM project as well as its impact to agencies.

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



Each CAB member gave an update about their respective agency and the meeting ended with an open forum for questions and discussion.

The next CAB meeting is scheduled for May 13 - 14, 2008, in Orlando, Florida.



SUCCESSFUL PAM PRODUCTION RELEASE

On March 15, 2008, the Payment Application Modernization (PAM) Project successfully completed their first production release signifying an important milestone in their efforts to modernize the way FMS processes payments. This first PAM release included 4.4 million Direct Deposit payments for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries that were distributed on April 1, 2008. The PAM Application will now continue to process these payments every month, converting five percent of FMS's total payments to the modernized system.

The success of this release comes after months of hard work and dedication to the project by a team that spanned all four Regional Financial Centers, FMS Headquarters and three Federal Reserve Banks. The PAM Project also received support and assistance from Social Security as they were vital in helping successfully test and prepare for this first release. The PAM Project Team has already begun to work on their future production releases, with the second release being ready for deployment later this year. While this release will incorporate and build off of the first release, the PAM application still has a lot of work to complete as they have over thirty outdated applications to convert to PAM. With each new production release, the PAM Project will have to undergo Certification and Accreditation activities, testing all aspects of the application and training Center employees on the updated application.

The PAM Application releases will continue to build on one another until PAM is fully implemented in late 2011. Upcoming PAM production releases include:

Production Release 2.0, October 2008: SSI Check and Daily Payments

Production Release 3.0, Third Quarter 2009: OPM Payments

Production Release 4.0, First Quarter 2010: Daily / Vendor Payments



READY FOR CHANGE? Agencies Prepare for New Treasury Account Symbol (TAS) and Business Event Type Code (BETC) Feature

The Government-Wide Accounting (GWA) modernization project will streamline the central accounting, reporting, and reconciliation process for Federal agencies and the Financial Management Service (FMS) in the near future. As early as 2012, all Federal agencies could be required to classify transactions using the Treasury Account Symbol (TAS) and Business Event Type Code (BETC) when initiating payments to Treasury.

The **TAS** is the unique alphanumeric code assigned by the Department of Treasury used in conjunction with a BETC to classify transactions.

The **BETC** is an eight-character code used to indicate the type of activity being reported, such as payments or collections. This code must accompany the TAS.

Agencies are encouraged to be pro-active in preparing for the new TAS-BETC formatting requirements. Updates and key milestones will be posted on the Secure Payment System (SPS), Payment Application Modernization (PAM), GWA, and Regional Financial Center (RFC) websites. Additionally, several links are provided which will allow each agency to evaluate the impact GWA and TAS-BETC will have on their operations.

The SPS web site has a document available on the right side of the page titled Agency Preparation Steps (GWA) at:

<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'.

It is highly recommended that you subscribe to these FMS sites (<http://fms.treas.gov/scripts/subscription/>) or update your FMS subscription (<http://fms.treas.gov/scripts/subscription/?Act=update>) so that you are notified on TAS-BETC updates.

Should you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Kansas City Financial Center Program Management Project Unit analysts Mike King or Lauren Ray at (816) 414-2100.



Customer Service—Lip Service or For Real



We, as consumers, get bombarded every day with commercial advertisements on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, mailing inserts, and billboards. Regardless of the type of advertisement, the one most common theme in all of them is that they profess to provide quality customer service. The fact that every advertisement makes such a claim leaves no doubt that quality customer service must be important!

Then why, as consumers, do we seem to always be disappointed with the service we receive or when the product we purchase doesn't work as advertised? Ever find yourself unable to find something in the store or how much it is? Ever had one of those occasions in which you could use some help from a clerk, only to not be able to find anyone? Or, worse yet, the clerks are chatting behind the counter and don't even give the slightest inclination or interest in who you are; or give you the impression that you are less important than their personal conversation? How about the lack of a simple "Thank You"? This short, but vitally important, phrase seems to be on the endangered vocabulary list these days.

So why the big disconnect; if advertisers know it's important, then why do they fall short more often than not in providing it? In my opinion, it has to do with a mindset, an attitude, and an organizational culture that lives it, breathes it, and practices it. It is not enough to simply say we provide quality customer service, or service is our top priority. Talk is cheap! True and bonafide customer service resides not in the declaration but in the execution.

The other day I stopped by a local grocery store early in the morning looking for a salad or some veggies and dip that I could take to work for my healthy lunch. What was prepared in the produce section had broccoli, cauliflower, celery, and carrots in it. Well everything was great except for the carrots—which I have never developed a taste for and my mom finally gave up trying to force me to eat them. A store clerk noticed my questioning deliberations and asked me if she could help. I explained my dilemma about the carrots. I expected her to say, "sorry that's just the way they come" and that would be that. Instead, she inquired as to whether I would prefer cherry tomatoes rather than the carrots—to which I readily responded "that would be great". The clerk made the substitution and handed me my veggies and I offered my heartfelt thanks. That ladies and gentlemen is Quality Customer Service!

That store clerk and the manner in which she handled this situation was masterful from a service perspective for many reasons. First of all, she obviously had the desire to help. She could have very easily kept about her business and not even acknowledged my personal dilemma. Secondly, she listened to the customer. And lastly, she took the initiative and was obviously empowered to provide the customer with what they desired.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The result is a happy customer and a customer that will remember that service and come back over and over. Because of that simple service act, the store has established customer loyalty that will translate into more sales for years to come.

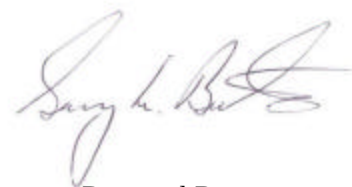
We at the Kansas City Financial Center have prided ourselves for years on the quality customer service we provide. And I can say with a great deal of confidence that when it comes to quality customer service we practice what we preach. There are positive signs everywhere you look and it's not an easy task given KFC has a large and diverse customer base (i.e., small/medium/large—military, law enforcement, legislative, executive, and judicial). Most noteworthy when it comes to positive signs of customer service is the fact that KFC received a perfect (100%) customer satisfaction survey response in 2007. We have been in the high 90 percentile for several years but 2007 was indeed a notable achievement. The Center also receives countless expressions of thank you's and recognition from our customer agencies for everything from answering the telephone with a live person (no automated system) to recovering a duplicate payment.

All of these signs point toward our doing something right when it comes to customer service. It begins with an attitude and a commitment that drives each KFC employee to strive to provide the best possible service. That attitude and commitment is literally woven into the KFC culture. You will find references to it directly or indirectly in our performance plans and in our interview questions. It is a key attribute for anyone applying for a position at the Center.

But the crowning achievement that sits atop KFC's quality customer service is the Customer Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB represents the link, or lifeline is a better term, to the agencies we serve—our customers. This past December the CAB celebrated its 15th anniversary! The length of time the CAB has been in place is in itself a testimony to the value this lifeline has in the eyes of our customers.

The KFC CAB was originally envisioned as a forum that would facilitate three primary things. First, it would serve as a vehicle for FMS to provide information to federal agencies regarding FMS products and services. Secondly, it would provide a forum for agencies to share best practices among themselves or network. And thirdly, the CAB would serve as a forum for agencies to provide input into KFC and FMS policies and initiatives. So at a very high level the CAB facilitates communication in all directions: FMS to agencies; agencies to FMS; and agency to agency. Integral to the agency to FMS communication aspect is listening. Over the years the KFC CAB has used this forum to help influence and shape changes in FMS policy. So, just as the grocery store clerk listened to my needs, so does the CAB listen to the needs of its customers.

The service-minded attitude displayed by all KFC employees combined with the effectiveness of the CAB makes for a solid quality service grounded organization. This has served as one of KFC's cornerstones for success in the past and remains in place today. Continued focus on service attitude and the CAB will help to ensure KFC's success into the future.



Regional Director

NO SATISFACTION?

Call Kansas City Financial Center and Get Yours Today!

Each year the Payment Management (PM) Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) Team conducts an assessment of our customer agency partners to determine the level of satisfaction with the Regional Financial Centers (RFCs) check and electronic payment services and customer service. The CSS Team is committed to improving the survey every year to obtain value-added information and to reflect the diverse services provided by the RFCs.

The CSS Team consists of representatives from each RFC. Sarah Recob and Mike King were the Kansas City Financial Center (KFC) representatives. The CSS Team worked together, with input from each RFC (Austin, Kansas City, Philadelphia, San Francisco), to produce four unique surveys. The surveys were sent electronically to more than one thousand PM agency customers. The 2008 KFC survey consisted of 8 primary statements plus an option to provide any comments or suggestions.

The results for KFC continue a tradition of excellence, as the satisfaction level in meeting customer needs for processing check and electronic payments and for overall customer service was **100%**. KFC also received very high marks for the customer service that agencies receive from the Help-desk Unit, Secure Payment Helpdesk, International Treasury Services (ITS.gov) Customer Support, and Pre-Authorized Debit collections customer support. Additionally, all agencies that use the KFC website find it to be current and useful.

Several of our customer agencies took the opportunity to provide comments or suggestions that reflected KFC's commitment to excellence. Some of the comments provided included:

- KFC always goes the extra mile.
- KFC is the model of a QUALITY organization – they are customer focused & professional in every sense (from top to bottom).
- The Kansas City Financial Center should be teaching other government agencies on how to deliver customer service – they are just GREAT!
- A great example of customer service being a high priority.

KFC appreciates all the comments and suggestions our customer agencies make – not only on our annual surveys, but anytime! We will continually strive to meet or exceed the needs of our customers.

Call KFC at (816) 414-2100 and get the satisfaction you deserve!

ASAP RELEASE 6.0

The Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) is a recipient-initiated electronic Internet payment and information system. Recipients initiate payment requests via ASAP to receive payments for Federal Domestic Assistance programs and to third party providers performing services on behalf of Federal Program Agencies (FPA). ASAP continues to provide its users with the functionality and enhancements necessary to effectively process grant payments. Release 6.0 of ASAP will be implemented on May 12, 2008 and will include the following enhancements:

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Processor Enrollment

Federal agencies will be able to link the EBT Processor account within ASAP to the respective State recipient organization Food Stamp Program for which it draws funds. Additionally, the EBT Processor's Authorizing Official will be able to assign their users with roles for the State recipient organization that they service. These processes were previously performed using paper forms.

Automated Clearing House (ACH) Debit Requests

This release will give recipient organizations the ability to return funds drawn through the ACH network to a specific ASAP account by initiating an ACH debit via ASAP. This debit request will initiate a debit against the recipient organization's bank account. Once the debit is processed, the amount is returned to the ASAP account from which it was originally drawn. ACH debit requests can only be made against payments that have settled in the last 32 business days. Currently, these returns are processed outside of the ASAP application and this enhancement will further consolidate payment processing within the ASAP application.

Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) Implementation

Release 6.0 will implement PKI functionality for ASAP's FPA Certifying Officers (CO). PKI technology will add additional security to further ensure ASAP authorizations are processed securely. With implementation of PKI functionality, FPA COs will log in using two factor authentication. This means that when a CO logs into ASAP, they will enter a User ID and password and will then be prompted to insert a PKI i-key and passphrase. Additionally, when a CO certifies a grant authorization in ASAP, they will be prompted to digitally sign the authorization certification using their PKI i-key and passphrase. Two factor authentication and digital signature functionality provides additional security for those individuals responsible for certifying grant funding.

ASAP continues to add functionality and enhancements to provide a comprehensive grant payment and accounting process. Release 6.0 furthers this development and the service provided to Federal agencies.

If you would like to learn more about ASAP, please contact the Kansas City Financial Center at 816-414-2100.



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Treasury

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Service is our first priority!



At the Kansas City Financial Center, we strive to provide quality service and are committed to excellence. If we can be of assistance to you in any way, please contact the Financial Services and Support Branch at (816) 414-2100.

The Kansas City Dispatch is produced by the Program Management Project Unit of the Customer Assistance and Services Support Section.

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December 2008 CAB - Kansas City, Missouri



When: December 2008

Where: the new Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

Watch for emails regarding new CAB online registration.

If you have questions regarding the CAB, please email KFCCAB@fms.treas.gov!