

Summer 2008  
Edition



FMS.TREAS.GOV/SFC

San Francisco Financial Center

**Financial Express**

BEST FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT NEWS IN THE WEST

## Government-wide Accounting Changes: Together We Can Make it Happen

The San Francisco Financial Center (SFC) teamed up with the Government-wide Accounting (GWA) project team to train federal agencies in Denver, Colorado on May 6-7, 2008. More than 80 people attended the four hour sessions and learned about important changes to GWA that will impact federal agencies.



The GWA team provided hands-on training to agencies that currently report the SF 224 in the Government Online Accounting Link System II (GOALS II) to the Partial FMS 224 on-line. This process began in June 2008 and will be completed by September 2008. Agencies will simply log on to the secure Web site at [www.gwa.gov](http://www.gwa.gov) to prepare the Partial FMS 224. Agency Chief Financial Officers and Certifying Officers will be notified when their agencies will need to report their transactions using the Partial FMS 224. An online tutorial is available at: [fms.treas.gov/gwa/training.html](http://fms.treas.gov/gwa/training.html).

As part of the training, staff from the SFC Products and Initiatives Branch informed agencies on how GWA will interface with the Secure

Payment System (SPS). Under GWA, agencies will classify transactions when they are initiated to the proper component-based GWA Treasury Account Symbol (TAS) and Business Event Type Code (BETC). All SPS payments will require a valid TAS-BETC before they can be certified. More detailed information is available at: [fms.treas.gov/sps/SPS-changes.html](http://fms.treas.gov/sps/SPS-changes.html). The ability to enter TAS-BETCs in SPS is targeted for calendar year 2011. Ultimately, GWA plans to convert all agencies to being GWA reporters. The project team will work with agencies directly to phase in the conversion.

Contact Eugenia Savoy at (202) 874-8209 for questions regarding the Partial FMS 224 and the SFC-SPS Help Desk at (510) 594-7144 for questions regarding the SPS conversion.



GOVERNMENTWIDE  
ACCOUNTING & REPORTING  
**gwa**  
Modernization

# THE SAN FRANCISCO RFC PERSPECTIVE...

Welcome to the 2008 summer edition of the “Financial Express,” the San Francisco Financial Center (SFC) newsletter to keep you informed.

During the past year, SFC introduced two new communication approaches to better serve our customers. The first is the SFC Web site at: [www.fms.treas.gov/sfc](http://www.fms.treas.gov/sfc). There you will find the latest information on FMS products and services, program updates, SFC initiatives, and upcoming training and events. The second platform to keep you informed is this newsletter. Our goal is to provide product information, program updates, financial news, and special features. This edition includes:



- Some important changes to the EFT Reclamation process.
- Action plans, developed by the SFC CAB workgroup, to address disaster recovery issues.
- The latest developments in government-wide accounting that will impact all Secure Payment System users. This story also highlights training provided to Denver-area federal agency personnel by SFC and Government-wide Accounting (GWA) project team members on the new Partial FMS 224.
- A review of our most recent CAB Conference, which was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. More than thirty-five federal agency representatives attended this lively event. All of our customer agency executives are welcome to become members in order to provide input to important financial management matters that may impact their agency.

We are continually looking for your ideas and suggestions on future stories, topics, and program content for this newsletter. I encourage you to forward your comments and suggestions to [financialexpress@fms.treas.gov](mailto:financialexpress@fms.treas.gov).

I am very excited about the first Payment Management Customer Conference, which will be held on August 26-27, 2008 in Chicago, Illinois. Attendees will include executives and staff from our customer federal agencies, all four of our Regional Financial Centers, and the Payment Management Washington Office. This conference will lead into the SFC Customer Advisory Board (CAB) Meeting, which will occur on August 28, 2008 at the same location. I invite you to attend both events in Chicago, Illinois, and discover innovative solutions and valuable resources available to your agency.

In closing I would like to personally thank you for your participation and feedback on the annual FMS survey. Listening is an important component of customer service, and we will continue to use this information to focus on developing programs, services, and an organization that meets the needs of you the customers.

Please enjoy this edition of the SFC “Financial Express.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. P. O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# SPECIAL PAYMENTS & CLAIMS BRANCH

## NEWS FLASH



Since the majority of Federal benefit payments are now issued via Direct Deposit, we sometimes receive inquiries asking what happens to such payments that are issued after the recipient dies? The answer to this question lies with a part of the Special Payments and Claims Branch called the Reclamation Section.

This group of fourteen hard working specialists is responsible for the collection from financial institutions of more than \$124 million annually in benefit payments that were issued after the death of the recipient.

The Direct Deposit program regulations (Title 31 of the CFR Part 210, Subpart B, Section 210.10(a) permit the recovery of benefit (retirement) payments made through the Automated Clearing House (ACH) to the account of a recipient who died before the date of the payment(s). The Reclamation Section staff members work closely with Federal Program agency personnel and financial institutions to recover these funds quickly and efficiently so that they can be returned to agency trust funds for the payment of future benefits.

Using the Green Book, which is FMS' guide to Federal ACH payments and collections, as their "bible," the SFC staff reclaims these post death payments on behalf of the Social Security Administration, Office of Personnel Management, Department of State, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Last year the SFC processed 102,164 ACH reclamation actions, and expects its workload to continue to grow as more and more benefit payments are made using Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The Reclamation Section is ready to continue meeting the challenge of carrying out this important part of the Direct Deposit Program. If you would like more information on EFT Reclamations, you may contact Patricia Butler at (510) 594-7179.



RECLAMATION SECTION

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# Albuquerque CAB Conference - A Success...NEXT UP The National Payment Management Conference in CHICAGO

On February 26-27, 2008, the San Francisco Financial Center (SFC) hosted the sixth Customer Advisory Board (CAB) Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. David Martin, CAB Chair, and Randall Christopherson, CAB Vice Chair, welcomed over thirty-five federal agency representatives, program speakers, and SFC staff.

The theme of the conference was “Partnering for Prosperity and Progress.” Guest speakers included Ms. Sheryl Morrow, Assistant Commissioner, Federal Finance, Financial Management Service, and Mr. William Bonds, Program Director, Western Management Development Center, Office of Personnel Management. Ms. Morrow provided an overview of Collections and Cash Management Modernization focusing on streamlining Treasury’s collections and cash management

functions. Mr. Bonds presented an interesting topic on Succession Planning and the four stages of assessment of leadership competencies. The conference featured updates on the Government-wide Accounting and Modernization Project, the Payment Application Modernization Project, and the Disaster Recovery Workgroup. Presentations from the Albuquerque CAB are available on the SFC Web site at: [fms.treas.gov/sfc/CAB-Albuquerque-08.html](http://fms.treas.gov/sfc/CAB-Albuquerque-08.html).

A special recognition award was given to Dave Martin for his outstanding service to the SFC CAB for the last four years. He recently retired from the Internal Revenue Service after 37 years of federal service. Randy Christopherson of the Small Business Administration will become the Chair at the next CAB meeting in Chicago, Illinois on August 28, 2008. On August 26-27, 2008, the first national

Payment Management (PM) Customer Conference will be held at The Allerton Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. The Regional Financial Centers will partner to provide a unique opportunity for agencies to network and learn about federal payments and accounting programs from high-level executives and program experts. SFC’s Regional Director, Phil Belisle, said,

*“We are excited about the opportunity to bring PM customers together to share ideas, best practices, success stories, and learn about the latest PM initiatives.”*

For more information about the upcoming PM Customer Conference and the San Francisco CAB meeting, go to: [fms.treas.gov/rfctraining.html](http://fms.treas.gov/rfctraining.html).



SFC CAB MEMBERS - GROUP PHOTO



*SFC CAB members taking a tour of the National Atomic Museum.*



*New members receiving a SFC coffee mug.*

## SFC CAB CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 26-27, 2008



*Left to Right: Rhonda Lambert, Phil Belisle, Sheryl Morrow, and Abbie Loftus, enjoying an evening in Albuquerque*



*CAB members getting ready for the world's longest tram ride to the High Finance restaurant.*



## ¡Olé for Go Direct !

¡Olé to the San Francisco Financial Center (SFC) for promoting Go Direct at the National Association of Federal Credit Union's 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference & Exhibition in San Diego, California on July 8-12, 2008. Credit unions serve over 90 million members nationwide. This event drew more than 1000 credit union leaders and staff, exposing attendees to new trends aimed at increasing membership, revenue, and customer satisfaction.

The SFC Products and Initiatives Branch distributed promotional materials in both English and Spanish, talked to credit union members, and answered numerous questions about Go Direct and other Financial Management Service programs.

Go Direct is a national campaign to motivate people who receive federal benefit payments to sign up for Direct Deposit. By promoting Direct Deposit, the government is planning for the first wave of baby boomers that are eligible to retire and receive social security benefits. Treasury anticipates a savings of \$131.5 million annually if these checks are converted to electronic funds transfer (EFT). Since 1986, the government and taxpayers have saved \$5 billion dollars as a result of converting check payments to EFT.

## SFC's Customer Advisory Board Workgroup Preparing for Disasters

In February 2007, the San Francisco Financial Center (SFC) Customer Advisory Board (CAB) established the Disaster Recovery Workgroup. The mission of the workgroup is to assure federal

agencies have continuous payment services during a disaster.

It is comprised of thirteen CAB members and SFC staff. Lake Gardner from Minerals Management Service and Joe Paule from SFC are the lead and co-lead. Other active members are Meyer Persow, Office of Personnel

Management; Nancy Thomas, Office of Navajo & Hopi Indian Relocation; along with the SFC staff: Eddie Cruz, Jackie Mitchell, Margaret Tong, Kevin Becker, Fay Rurup, and Sandra Young.

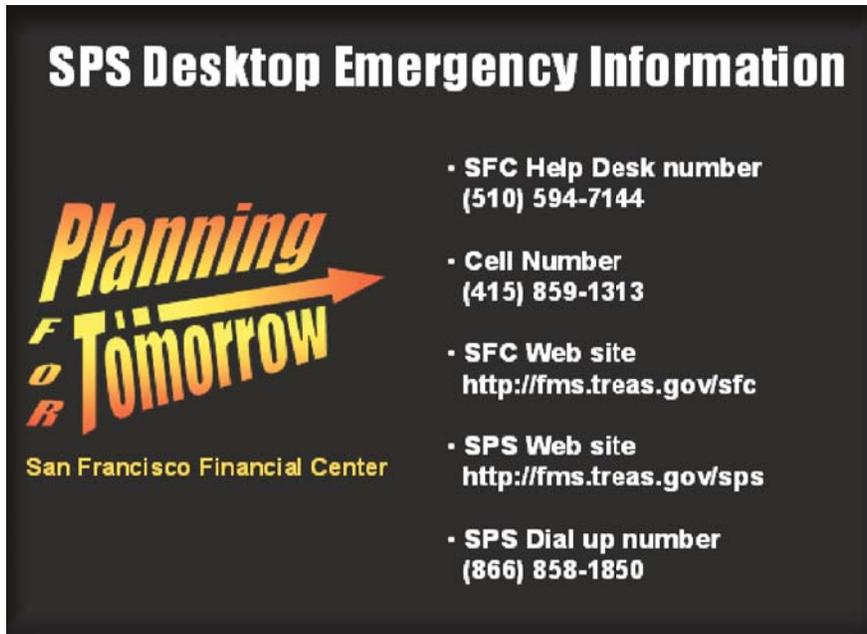
The first project completed was the verification of agency connectivity with Hyattsville Regional Operations Center (HROC) and Kansas City

Regional Operations Center (KROC). KROC will be FMS' primary data center in the future. Since the agencies have connectivity with HROC, it is imperative that each agency that

processes bulk payment files also establish connectivity to KROC. A letter was sent and telephone contact was made to each agency verifying connectivity to HROC and KROC.

The second project completed was development of the Secure

Payment System (SPS) Desktop Emergency Information magnet and computer mouse pad. These items will provide agencies with important SFC and SPS phone numbers and Web site addresses to use in the event of a disaster. The magnet and mouse pad will be distributed to agencies by mail and at the next SFC CAB meeting on August 28, 2008, in Chicago, Illinois.



**SPS Desktop Emergency Information**

*Planning  
FOR Tomorrow*

San Francisco Financial Center

- SFC Help Desk number (510) 594-7144
- Cell Number (415) 859-1313
- SFC Web site <http://fms.treas.gov/sfc>
- SPS Web site <http://fms.treas.gov/sps>
- SPS Dial up number (866) 858-1850

Mouse Pad



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AARP Conference: Generations Connecting to Change  
Washington, DC - September 2-7, 2008

WesPay: Payments Symposium  
Las Vegas, NV - September 7-9, 2008

WesPay: Operations Conference  
Las Vegas, NV - September 10, 2008

SFC Customer Advisory Board  
Monterey, CA - March 10-11, 2009



VISIT THE SFC WEBSITE AT:  
[WWW.FMS.TREAS.GOV/SFC](http://WWW.FMS.TREAS.GOV/SFC)

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS  
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