“The road to success is always under construction.” Lily Tomlin
"Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.” Henry J. Kaiser
"The shortest distance between two points is under construction.” Noelie Alito

Everyone knows it. Like the "Sharp Edges" sign above, it is obvious to most of us that we are surviving through a recession. The construction industry has been hit especially hard and as a result resources have become limited. Time, money and people have become strained while owners and employees work tirelessly to manage and survive the chaos. While survival is still at the forefront for some, some are in recovery mode. These issues hit home for me on a personal level because I have so many friends and compatriots in the construction industry and it has been difficult to watch them deal with the countless challenges and uncertainties brought on by the economy. The good news is that we are in a slow and steady recovery of the industry and the economy as a whole. While we all know that rebuilding will take time, perseverance and hard work, I am very proud to say that the industry and its leaders have proven that we are resilient and we are here to stay. Creating our own opportunities by looking within our available resources will help us to continue our recovery. Innovation, creativity and differentiation are just some of the ways that we can pave this road (Heavy Highway pun). Relationships and face time become even more crucial as competition has increased exponentially and bids are within mere points of our competitors. Collaboration during highly competitive times has created opportunities through joint ventures and private partnerships, which are becoming more prevalent. Inbound international investors are bringing money, technology and opportunities for collaboration. The light is at the end of the tunnel, we just need to be looking for it.

Although the industry has been struggling, the Georgia Chapter is better than ever. We have remained one of the strongest and biggest Chapters in the country, which is directly attributable to the caliber of our members and their unwavering support of the industry. Mike Kiblinger and the rest of the Program Committee have worked tirelessly to bring relevant and timely topics to the meetings. Ed Baker, Publisher of the Atlanta Business Chronicle, returned in November to provide us with his insights on the local, state and national economy as well as draw one of our largest crowds to our monthly meetings. The return of our successful FREE Friday program provided free education on specific topics for our members such as surety, workers compensation and other relevant topics. We have also had an unprecedented three networking socials - our beer tasting at 5 Seasons Brewery, our extremely successful Toys for Tots fundraiser at Stoney River and our fantastic Mardi Gras themed casino night. Our program offerings along with our members make our Chapter special and we strive to bring value to your Chapter experience.

I want to personally thank my fellow officers, Board members, committee members and especially our members for making this a great year - not just for the Chapter but for me personally. Thank you also to Mike Molaro and his cohorts at National for their unending support. It has been my honor and privilege to serve as your President for the past year. I look forward to seeing each of you in the upcoming year!

Buffi M. Ball
Immediate Past Chapter President 2010-2011
Supporting ICCIFP’s Strategic Initiatives

The Institute of Certified Construction Industry Financial Professionals (ICCI FP) continues to achieve increased recognition and value for the certified persons and their employers. Many CCIFPs have received pay increases and/or promotions, and even company ownership opportunities, since acquiring the credential. We’ve heard numerous stories of CCIFPs having an advantage over other employment candidates in this difficult job market. Employers are recognizing and reaping the benefits of financial staff who are knowledgeable, seasoned professionals. Active CCIFPs now number more than 750 nationwide!

ICCI FP has also gained the endorsement of industry-leading associations like ASA, CFMA, CICPAC, IRMI, and others. In 2009, the NASBP model contractor questionnaire added the CCIFP credential as criteria for use in evaluating surety bond applications, which acknowledges the value of the CCIFP designation to the Surety Industry.

CFMA chapters continue to provide opportunities for their members through offering the CCIFP Overview Seminar and Fundamentals of Construction ethics course. Many also have formed Peer Groups to share best practices among CCIFPs—another benefit to their employers. In efforts to continue this positive growth and recognition trend, ICCIFP developed a Strategic Plan to guide the future success of the organization. Strategic initiatives of the Plan include:

• Branding and marketing campaigns designed to raise awareness of the CCIFP credential;
• Creation of additional education classes for construction financial professionals; and
• The quest for ANSI accreditation for the CCIFP designation.

ICCI FP will be contacting CFMA chapters seeking financial support in pursuit of these initiatives. Its goal is to raise a minimum of $25,000 a year for the next three years to help fund its progress and make the CCIFP designation more valuable to you, your employer, and the industry. In addition to a personal commitment, ICCIFP will provide a letter for you to discuss supporting ICCIFP with your employer—many companies have a “matching gift” program, which is encouraged for you to take advantage if possible.

Reduced Exam Retake Fee Approved

Know someone who has unsuccessfully taken the CCIFP Exam? We’ve listened to those candidates and have reduced one of the barriers to retaking the exam—the fees.

At its June 2010 Meeting, the ICCIFP Board of Trustees approved a reduced examination re-take fee of $335 for CFMA Members and $375 for Non-Members. All unsuccessful candidates from 2004 through June 2010 have until December 2011 to take advantage of this reduced fee opportunity. Unsuccessful candidates who take the exam beginning in July 2010 have an 18-month period from the date of their original examination to sit for the exam at the reduced fee. All candidates need to resubmit the non-refundable application fee ($95 for Members; $150 for Non-Members) to be seated for the examination at the reduced fees.

Encourage your peers to take advantage of this offer so that they can proudly say, “I am a CCIFP!”

What do I need to know for the CCIFP exam?
The exam covers nine content areas: Accounting & Reporting, Income Recognition, Budgeting & Planning, Risk Management, Taxes, HR, Legal, IT, and Joint Ventures. Get a detailed outline of these content areas in the Candidate Bulletin.

How should I prepare?
Review the exam content, select resources to help you study, and answer the sample questions provided. More tips are provided in the Candidate Information Bulletin. A Study Guide is also available from CFMA. More information can be found at: www.iccifp.org
Leaders’ Edge
Achieving Greatness: The Value of Association

Association leaders and corporate executives have long recognized that great lessons—lessons in leadership, team building, handling adversity, and managing success—can be learned from their peers in the world of sports.

This explains why some of the most sought after public speakers at corporate events are sports greats. Miami Heat president Pat Riley, Duke University men’s basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski, former Pittsburgh Steeler running back Rocky Bleier, and former LSU men’s basketball coach Dale Brown are among the most popular speakers on the circuit. The lessons they teach and exhibit in their world translate perfectly into yours.

Some of the best lessons learned, however, have come from the greatest winner of them all, the late John Wooden, former UCLA men’s basketball coach and winner of an unprecedented 10 NCAA championships. Wooden also was often tapped for corporate consulting on the subject of leadership.

One characteristic he was passionate about was that the truly “great” understand the value of association. They know they can only become great if they surround themselves with others who are headed in that direction.

“Many people, when they ask me about coaching great players, always ask me about my two most famous centers, Lew Alcindor (who became Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) and Bill Walton,” said the 97-year-old Wooden about three years before his death. “But one of the greatest I have ever coached is a player many wouldn’t suspect. It was Swen Nater.”

Nater was cut from his high school basketball team because, even at 6’11”, he was too clumsy to offer any team value. He didn’t give up, though, and several years later made a community college team. He became talented enough that several four year colleges offered him scholarships.

At that time, UCLA and Wooden were in the middle of one of the most spectacular runs in all of sports, winning seven of eight national championships. Alcindor had graduated, but Wooden had a new center, Walton, who he thought might be even better.

Nater’s community college coach asked Wooden to consider his player.

“I was told he could, at very least, be a great practice opponent for Walton,” Wooden said. “So I spoke with Swen. I was honest. I told him he could go to a small school and play all the minutes he wanted, or he could come to UCLA, where he likely would never start a game, but where he could play against the best center in the country every day. That’s the best I could offer him.”

Nater didn’t flinch. He accepted the opportunity and, as Wooden had promised, he didn’t start a single game at UCLA.

“When his three years at UCLA were complete, Nater had been part of a team that won a record-breaking 88 straight games and had played for three more national championships—all as Walton’s backup.”

Nater then made history when he became the first player selected in the first round of the professional basketball draft without ever starting a college game. He played 12 years professionally and now is a senior associate with the best he could.

Coach Wooden was succinct: “Mark these words. You will never out-perform your inner circle. If you want to achieve more, the first thing you should do is improve your inner circle.”

At its core, that is exactly why associations hold annual events. Those conventions are a member’s opportunity to improve his or her inner circle, to learn and associate with the very best.

Like Swen Nater, it is hoped that each of us has identified those on our profession from who we could learn, those who share our passion for greatness. Then, while attending our state or national conferences, introduce ourselves, spend time asking and learning what it is they do that makes them successful. These lessons are often transferable.

Take the lessons home with you. Make your aspirations known to your staff and your membership because they want to associate themselves with greatness, too. You’ll be amazed by what you can achieve when you surround yourself with those headed in the same direction.

At each of these steps, you’ll understand why John Wooden agreed that the value of association is one of the most significant traits of greatness.

Wooden’s Words

“If you’re not making mistakes, then you’re not doing anything. I’m positive that a doer makes mistakes.”

“Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be.”

“It’s what you learn after you know it all that counts.”

“It’s the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen.”

Former UCLA Men’s Basketball Coach John Wooden often quoted Abraham Lincoln when he spoke, and his “Pyramid of Success” were words that affected many non-basketball careers. Here are some of Coach Wooden’s most famous sayings.

“Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.”


“Don’t measure yourself by what you have accomplished, but by what you should have accomplished with your ability.”

“Success comes from knowing that you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming.”
13th Annual Georgia Chapter 2010 CFMA Golf Tournament
Stone Mountain, GA

Special appreciation to our corporate sponsors:

…… and a big thank you to our Platinum Sponsor

Winners Circle
Recent Meetings and Events

**General Meeting – February 16, 2011**
“Health Care Reform So Far”
Liz Frayer - Strategic Employee Benefit Services

**General Meeting – March 16, 2011**
“Surety Market Update”
Brian Perry – Sterling Risk Advisors
D.J. Conroy – Travelers Insurance
Jerry Lovings – CAN
Paul Moore – Chubb

**Social Event – March 26, 2011**
CFMA Casino Night

**General Meeting – April 20, 2011**
“Credit Market Update”
Dev Strischek – SunTrust Bank

**Free Friday – April 29, 2011**
“Risk & Obligation Trends”
Thomas Kelleher, Tom Abernathy – Smith Currie & Hancock

**Seminar – May 10, 2011**
“CCIFP Exam Overview”
Jack Godfrey – Saxton
Steven James - American Safety Insurance

**General Meeting – May 11, 2011**
“Nuclear Power Plant Construction”
Annalisa Thomson-Spinelli – Oglethorpe Power
Antony Sanacory – Duane Morris

General Meetings and Free Fridays are packed with networking opportunities, timely and relevant industry updates, and CPE credits.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Happy Hour - Thursday Aug 4th 2011
5 Seasons Brewing, Sandy Springs

Benefit & Scholarship Golf Tournament - Wednesday August 24th 2011
St. Ives Country Club, Johns Creek

CCIFP Review Course - TBD
CCIFP Exam, Greensboro NC – Nov 2, 2011

Stuart Binstock, CEO of CFMA visiting the Georgia Chapter – November 2011

My husband and I attended the CFMA casino social and enjoyed every moment of it! The New Orleans gourmet style crawfish gumbo was spicy and delicious along with all the other good munchies. We don’t really know how to gamble, and it was so much fun to be given $25,000 in play money to buy chips and then to learn how to play blackjack or poker or shoot craps. We laughed and laughed with the other members and their guests. The music was jazzy and made you want to dance.

The culminating event was when my name was called winning the $1,000 CFMA conference registration fee! How lucky am I! I was totally in shock as I heard Buffi say a couple of times “get up here and claim your prize!” I attend the monthly CFMA meetings as often as I can. With the company’s fabrication facility in Union City, it is not too difficult to swing around I285 to attend the luncheons. And I find these sessions to be extremely informative.

Will report back after the my first and “free” CFMA conference in Grapevine, TX!

Vicki Mitchell, CFO
Mortensen Woodwork
Member's Corner: Share a thought, a comment, a pun!

- “Good judgement comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgement.”
- “He who pulls the oars does not have time to rock the boat.”
- “If a listener nods his head when you're explaining your program, wake him up.”
- “If a program is useful it will be changed, if it is useless, it will be documented.”
- “If everything is coming your way, you are probably in the wrong lane.”
- “Anything that doesn't eat you today is saving you for tomorrow.”
- “Assumption is the mother of all foul-ups.”
- “Be content with what you've got, but be sure you've got plenty.”
- “By the time you can make ends meet, they've moved the ends.”
- “By the time you have the right answers, no one is asking you questions.”

Submit your comments to: andy@clevelandgroup.com

The Georgia Chapter is Strong!

Contact Lori Greene lori@greeneesf.com or http://chapters.cfma.org/Georgia/index.htm for details.

Improve job performance, maximize profitability, discover new possibilities.
Be a CFMA member!
The more members we have, and the more involved we are, the stronger our chapter becomes.
Introduce CFMA to someone.

New National Membership Categories Effective April 1, 2011:
International Member  Member in Transition
Retired Member
Educator Member  Student Member
Get Involved in these Chapter Committees!

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Georgia Chapter Board Meetings 2011/2012:
Wednesday, August 31st 7:30 AM
Wednesday, December 7th 7:30 AM
Wednesday February 29th 7:30 AM

Members are welcome to attend Board meetings but you **must** RSVP to Emily Scott at Emily.T.Scott@erac.com or 770.821.0000 if you plan to attend.

About CFMA  The Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA) is “The Source & Resource for Construction Financial Professionals” and the only nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the construction financial professional. Established in 1981, CFMA’s General Members represent all types of contractors – including generals and subs – as well as developers, construction managers, architects, engineers, principals, and material and equipment suppliers. Associate Members include the accounting, insurance, surety, software, legal, and banking specialists who serve the construction industry. CFMA chapters in major cities from Maine to Hawaii offer local workshops, seminars, and programs that complement the extensive member services provided by CFMA Headquarters in Princeton, NJ. CFMA currently has more than 7,000 members in 88 chapters throughout the U.S.

CFMA’s Core Purpose  To provide resources to meet challenges of construction financial professionals.

Core Values  Integrity, Competency, Relationships & Friendships, Leadership, Innovation, Member Responsiveness.