Message from the Outgoing Chair

Following is the presentation Outgoing Chair Cathy Allen gave at the closing general session at the 34th Annual Conference.

This is my last time addressing you as Chair of the organization. Typically, outgoing chairs tend to take a look back at the last two years and highlight some of the more interesting topics we’ve had to deal with, some of the inevitable new terminology that has cropped up and spend some time looking forward to the future.

I looked back at Mr. Bill Savidge’s remarks from two years ago and quickly realized that the new terminology and program changes he mentioned then are still part of our landscape today. We are still living with debt service, assessed valuation, furloughs; shovel ready, priorities in funding, and local control.

A few new buzzwords have joined the ones just mentioned:

• CABs, and while not new, this financing method has become a hot topic;
• Sequestration – I’m still not sure what that means!
• And our favorite, “Applications Received Beyond Authority”.

There are more, of course; and we will continue to adapt as we always do.

Today, however, I’d like to spend my last few minutes as Chair sharing some personal thoughts with you. When I do the math, I realize that I am close to becoming one of the ‘old-timers’ that have been with C.A.S.H. for a really long time! This is my 21st C.A.S.H. Conference. There are probably less than a handful of people in the room who made it to the first conference and are still with us today. Will those folks who attended the first C.A.S.H. Conference please stand? I would also like to recognize Gene Hartline, our first Chair of the organization. I believe the fact that we are close to ending our 34th Annual Conference is something to celebrate. It shows the resilience of this organization. I mentioned earlier our ability to adapt to changes. We wouldn’t be here today if we were not successful in adapting to everything that’s thrown at us. The power of this organization, through its members, to influence legislation, shape future programs, speak out when we know something to be amiss and yet still maintain the quality reputation that is C.A.S.H. is enormous!

With that power comes great responsibility. This organization has a glorious and stellar history. Sadly, some of the founders of this organization are not with us anymore. We’ve lost some truly wonderful people in the last several years. They are and always will be a valued part of the history of C.A.S.H. What this means to me is that, with my 21 years with C.A.S.H. it becomes my responsibility…and others of us old-timers…to ensure that our history stays alive.

Fortunately, we have established a way to make that happen. The C.A.S.H. Leadership Academy has provided one avenue to share knowledge, history and stories of how C.A.S.H. came to be. As our membership becomes a little younger, we will rely on you to carry on the good work that began in 1978. That you’re here today warms my heart. I see great promise and possibility in front of me. The reason the organization is so successful is the people behind it. So, whether you’re an old-timer like me…or a relatively new participant with us, our role is to teach and learn and continue the fine work this organization is known for.

With that, I thank you so much for allowing me to serve as your Chair. It has truly been an honor.