



Governmental Collectors Association of Texas

November 2020 Newsletter

A Message From Your 2020 GCAT Board

Greetings my fellow GCAT Members! What a year 2020 has turned out to be! The Covid-19 pandemic has proven to be a total disaster in all facets of our daily lives and that of the courts. The worst part of this crisis falls heavily on those individuals working paycheck to paycheck or have lost their jobs entirely. Families are unable to pay their rent, monthly bills, much less their fines and court costs. Which leaves us court collectors wondering what does the future holds for us? With talks of defunding the police and the discharge of fines, fees and court debt, where does that leave us? Our goal is to show our local government leaders our department's value in collecting revenue for our counties and municipalities.

Now more than ever we need to focus on the legislative changes that will affect our collection efforts. We invite you all to our 21st annual GCAT conference May 4th through May 7th, 2021 for answers and tips to improve your court collection efforts. As always, you may reach out to the GCAT members for any questions you may have in regards to court collection procedures and ideas. In addition, you may reach out to any of our GCAT board at any time you ever have questions or concerns.

Finally, due to changes coming out of Bowie County, Cassey Tutt and Jo Ann Mahaffey had to step down from their positions on the board. Shawna Goerlitz from Brazos County is now our Secretary and Rochelle Kimbrough from Randall County is now a member of the GCAT board. We are so happy that you two are a part of our great GCAT team. The rest of the board positions have all been extended another year due to the conference being cancelled and we were unable to hold an election. If you are interested in a position on the board and would like to be put on the ballot, please reach out to me with any questions you may have.

Being a member of the GCAT board of directors for the past 5 years has been such a pleasure and I feel privileged to be a part of an organization that is dedicated to improving court collections throughout the state of Texas.

Andrea Weilacher – President
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Membership Fees

RENEWING MEMBER

Annual Dues

Invoices will be mailed out soon for the \$50.00 membership renewal fees. The cutoff date to get those paid is April 15, 2021. Please note that if your membership fees

are not received before this due date, you will not be eligible to vote in the upcoming election. New member fees are regularly \$150.00 per person but we are having a limited time special, two new members for \$150 until March 31, 2021. If you know of a member who is no longer working in your department or a new employee has replaced them, please let me know so that I may update our records.

GCAT Conference Updates

As you all know, the COVID pandemic has put a strain on all of our county and municipality budgets. Due to budget cuts, the GCAT board has agreed to lower the cost of the 2021 conference. The costs for members will be lowered to \$150 and non-members to \$200. We are hoping that the lowered conference cost will help increase our member attendance during this difficult time. As always, you may apply for a scholarship to help defer the costs. The GCAT conference is May 4th thru May 7th, 2021 and will be held at the Courtyard Marriott Allen Event Center in Allen Texas. Be sure to be on the lookout for hotel information and agenda updates on the GCAT website <https://www.govcat.net/>



Scholarship Information

Five scholarships are available this year. The scholarship will cover your GCAT 2021 Conference Registration fee only. The criteria is a 150-200 word description of how attending the 2021 GCAT conference will benefit you, your city or county. Email all essays to Andrea Weilacher at andrea.weilacher@dentoncounty.com and Tanya Skinner at tskinner@brazoscountytexas.gov.

Award Nominees

If you would like to nominate someone or a department for the following awards please email Stephanie McCormick smccormick@burnetcountytexas.org or Shawna Goerlitz SGoerlitz@brazoscountytexas.gov. Here is a list of awards that are up for grabs. More detailed information about each award may be found on the GCAT website. <http://govcat.net/awards.html>

Most Innovative Program - Awarded to the organization selected as having most improved collections by developing and implementing innovative procedures, systems, or techniques in the past year.

Collector of the Year - Awarded to the collector selected as having had the greatest impact on collections and the collections effort for their city or county in the past year.

Collections Programs of the Year - Awarded to the program showing the most dramatic increase in revenue for their city or county in the past year.

Excellence in Service Award - Awarded to the individuals or programs selected for unselfishly providing assistance to others embodying the elements of dedication, commitment, and service, to the association and its membership.

Becky Sirmans Award - Awarded to the individuals or programs selected for finding a way to succeed in spite of seemingly insurmountable obstacles and challenges embodying the spirit to never give up.

Honorary Membership - Honorary membership is an honor reserved for those non-member individuals that the association believes has gone above and beyond the call of duty in assisting the association in achieving its mission and vision.

I Bet You Didn't Know...

It takes 27,000 trees a day to keep up with the world's toilet paper demands.

The founder of Pringles was buried in a Pringles can.

Over 400 million M&Ms are produced every day.

If you stacked every Oreo ever made, they would reach the moon and back over 5 times.

In a deck of cards, the king of hearts is the only king without a mustache.

Nobody knows exactly who holds the patent for the fire hydrant because the patent office that held the records burned down!

CoACC National Maddie Award

In February, Tanya Skinner and I had the honor of representing GCAT at the 2020 National Conference on American Court Collections held in Las Vegas Nevada. GCAT was nominated for the 2020 National "Making A Difference" or "Maddie" Award. The Maddie Awards goes to any outstanding individual, team, court or program with the greatest impact on court collections throughout the year.

Even though the big winner was Palm Beach County based out of Florida, it truly was an honor to be nominated.



Sweet Potato Crunch Recipe

This has been a family favorite every Thanksgiving. Not everyone is a fan of sweet potatoes, but this recipe is sure to win them over.

2-29oz cans sweet potatoes – mashed

1 cup sugar	2 eggs beaten
½ tsp vanilla	½ tsp salt
½ cup milk	4 TBS butter, melted

Mix all of the above ingredients in a bowl until smooth. Spread in a 9 inch square baking dish.

Topping:

1 cup brown sugar	1 cup chopped nuts
1/3 cup butter, melted	1/3 cup all-purpose flour

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine brown sugar, flour, nuts and melted butter. Spread evenly over the sweet potato mixture. Bake for 35 minutes. (Glass 9 inch square pan 50 minutes)

