

# 2006 NCEA Finance & Accounting Workshop Survey

September 25 & 26, 2006, Duluth, MN -- 43 Responses out of 65 attendees (66%)

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	N/A
1. Overall, rate your NCEA Workshop experience:	40%	58%	2%	-	-
2. Rate our meeting room facility	35%	56%	9%	-	-
3. Rate the meals -- breakfast, lunches dinner & breaks:	52%	44%	2%	-	2%
4. Rate the printed materials, packets, and handouts:	44%	49%	5%	-	2%

Loved the cruise, meals were excellent...Big thank you to both Pam & Dale...Could have had a bit larger room, so everyone could sit at table...Bottled water would have been good...Overall the workshop was good, maybe need more time on some presentations to cover topic more thoroughly. Excellent round tables, are very useful/informative... Dinner cruise was a winner once again...Some of the power point boxes needed to be enlarged with the handouts, for readability...Too many onions, peppers, tacos take too long for a lunch, especially since could serve from one side of table...Need loud speaker, not all speakers have a loud voice...Nice location, hospitality...Hotel was nice -- very convenient...A longer lunch hour would've been good...More of a lunch hour and break from speakers.

## 5. Please rate and comment on the sessions and speakers (check your answer):

A. "Creating & Maintaining Anti-Fraud..." John Hall	86%	12%	-	-	2%
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Reveals the threat to assets by not addressing aggressively the control process...Excellent/entertaining presentation on a topic we don't think of often enough in our area (tax)...Great speaker -- could have gone a little deeper into the subject...Great speaker and very interesting...Good material and the 'take-aways' for future use...Very interesting, very knowledgeable...Enjoyed John's presentation, very informative...Maybe we should go for three in a row...Like the emphasis on internal fraud...Use of actual examples was helpful...Good use of real life examples...Too long for 'meat' of subject and didn't need to know his week's schedule...Still fresh and good material...Very interesting speaker...Very interesting and dynamic presenter...Good speaker, important topic...Great seminar...Great at keeping the info 'exciting', wonderful speaker...Great.

B. "FASB Update" Scott Loveless	26%	58%	14%	-	2%
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Seemed very knowledgeable on the subjects addressed...Good topic -- needed more time to thoroughly cover these very important topics...Did not apply to me -- knowledgeable presenter...Easy to understand, good summary of what is actually happening...Key points were hard to extract from the PowerPoint presentation material -- too many words...Did the best he could in one hour on too many subjects...Good overview...Was timely and well prepared...Not as applicable for me, but interesting...A little fast -- give more background info for those with less exposure to these topics...Good information, nice speed...Info didn't apply to me.

C. "SEC Reporting" Cliff Hoffman	12%	55%	29%	2%	2%
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Good -- strayed from presentation but insight/advice was very informative...Did not apply to me...Enjoyed his candor and perceptions...Key points were hard to extract from the PowerPoint presentation material...A little drawn out...Great points, pertinent comments...Rather dry speaking style...Slides not in PowerPoint order...Slides out of order, hard to follow presentation...Seemed scattered, dry, kept going and going and going -- stop when you are done.

D. "NCEA Company Overview" Allete	8%	50%	24%	-	18%
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Show pictures of Allete people...The speaker was good, but is it necessary to have anything while we lunch? Networking time instead...Missed a good opportunity to have people network during lunch...Brief, could have had more details, maybe some A/V assistance with materials...Always nice to know/learn about history of member companies...The speaker gave a very brief overview...Interesting presentation...Nice overview of company...Not needed over lunch period...Would prefer no speaker over lunch.

E. "RTO Accounting Procedures" Jo Biggers	7%	45%	32%	14%	2%
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Great materials, so-so presenter...Didn't expand much on the slides...Nice overview of what MISO does -- good overview of MISO settlement process, interesting cost comparison by ISO, clearly this will change over time...Hard to understand, appeared to treat complicated subject 'nonchalantly'...Went through slides quickly, could have expanded on some areas...Nice summary...Her response to the initial question on loss estimation was rude, isn't the purpose of MISO to provide a service to us as utilities? Perhaps someone who could answer accounting questions should have been sent...Didn't seem to be confident on the topic she was presenting...Wish slide prints were enlarged since they had so much info on each...Was smug and gave impression that role of MISO is too complicated to explain, she had ok moments, but overall not so good for a VP...She seemed unsure of some of the topics she presented, hard to hear. Covered topics too quickly...Very interesting, hard time hearing...Good material, presentation a little rushed...Some trouble hearing...Someone from operations might have been better.

## F. Monday's Workshop Roundtable Discussions

30% 53% 12% - 5%

**Internal Reporting:** There was some good discussion concerning common/current issues related to imaging and FERC training/education for operations employees... Good discussions... Very good, I liked the networking, listening to other processes in other utilities... Good participation... Very good discussion among companies represented... Hearing how other handle like problems is helpful.

**Income tax:** Excellent discussion/sharing on current tax issues and software... We had good discussions on current issues.

**Property:** Could use participant from all companies, only four represented.

**Internal Audits:** Need more Director/Manager/Officer level participation to get broader perspective... More reps from companies would help discussions... Nice discussion with other IA leaders... followed questions plus other questions that presented themselves during this time.

**Financial Statements:** Good discussion. I liked having it in the afternoon of the first day... Knowledge base of participants on pertinent topics was limited... We had good discussion. I would've liked more actual financial statement questions.

**Forecasting & Budgeting:** It was valuable to hear how other companies approach the forecasting and budgeting function... As a new person to the financial group, it was nice to get an idea as to how others set their financial forecasts & budgets.

## 6. What future topics would you like presented at our 2007 NCEA Finance & Accounting Workshop?

KPI (Key Performance Indicators) used at utilities... Continue with FASB & SEC updates and roundtables... Need to stay updated on FAS & SEC issues, CAPX 2020 status update... Current accounting topics... Motivating other departments or communicating effectively with other departments for good info flow... Help on operations, non-sox, audits... Role of the audit committee, role of internal audit... More MISO/RTO, FASB update by CPH firm (D&T is excellent), SEC reporting update, enterprise risk management – practical approach... NCEA – what do they do? More background... Any topic in utilities is a good topic as long as can get a good speaker... A motivating speaker for the end of the conference... More MISO accounting issues, rate case issues... Concerns over use of spreadsheets in reporting, (Patrick O'Beirne is an excellent speaker on topic)... Timely issues that pertain to business.

## 7. For the 2007 Finance & Accounting Workshop, please weigh in on the following:

Select best month for you:

September: 43%, mid-end of month
October: 2%, third week
November: 7%, last two weeks
August/September: 7%, after the 10th
September/October: 5%, mid-end of month
September/November: 2%, third or fourth week

Would you consider having this workshop at an NCEA member utility location and where?

Bismarck... No preference... Bismarck... Minneapolis... Minneapolis... Minneapolis... Fergus Falls, Bismarck, Wisconsin... Fergus Falls... Twin Cities

Provide feedback that will lend itself to a better workshop:

Coordinate the participation of each group separately (e.g. Internal Audit) before you commit to attending. I.e. if no one else is planning to attend, then we might change plans accordingly... I like hearing the roundtable discussion on the first day. It helps to stay focused on the speakers when there is a break... Better directions from hotel to meeting facility (map)... I wish the timing would not be so close to EEL's Accounting and Audit training. Would like electronic copy of presentations. MISO, for example, is hard to read due to dark background on some slides... Liked presentations in one book... Would be nice to have some time to see the sites at the location you're at. I don't care to have the Monday night meal. Would have liked to have more time to see Duluth. Not every minute of everyday needs to be conference.

## 8. Comment on the "Economic Value" of participating in this event and the NCEA in general:

Valuable, the regionalization comes out as we deal with common regulatory agencies... The workshop is well worth the time and money invested, I always learn something useful... Low cost training and updates... A good value for participants... I like getting feedback on specific industry topics, which companies in this region are experiencing, whether through the roundtable or speaker... Excellent value for CPE credits and networking with other companies. Dale, thanks for the good conference... Well worth the event, good networking, topics were pertinent... A bit too tightly scheduled. Would have appreciated some 'down' time... Good economic value... Great value for the cost. Dale always does an excellent job and Allethe has been a great host... The economic value is exceptional, cost of attending is minimal and location offers low cost lodging, excellent in comparison to other conferences in comparison to info/knowledge obtained.

**2007 NCEA Finance & Accounting Workshop**  
**September 24-25, 2007 -- Ramada Mall of America – Bloomington, MN**