

The Bottom Line Returns - APRIL 2002

Many of you have asked that The Bottom Line be reinstated. Some of you don't know what The Bottom Line is—it was the periodic newsletter of the Extension Business Office in which we provided updates on changed procedures and other informational topics. In the hustle and bustle of all the other pressing issues, we let the Bottom Line lapse and have communicated changes in periodic email messages to selected list serves.

The old format was printed copy. The time required to generate the document, get it printed, and mailed out was overwhelming. As is being done with most other newsletters, The Bottom Line will be in an electronic format.

Business Office Home Page <http://osuebusiness.ag.ohio-state.edu/>

The Extension Business Office home page contains information on policies and procedures; links to other OSU offices; and various forms used by the Business Office. We encourage you to take a look at the home page and the information that is available there. Let us know if there is other information you would like to see posted or linked from our home page. Visit our page and take a look around!!

Many University forms are on the home page--under the "Forms" tab.

We often get questions about records retention; the OSUE records retention schedule is under "Information."

We also heard that you wanted an updated procedures handbook.

We're working on it (and we've been working on it a long time!) A revised version of the handbook will be on our homepage. Our hope is to provide you with valuable links where possible instead of restating policies and procedures.

If you aren't sure who to call for help, take a look at the "About the Business Office" page. If you want to see a picture of the Business Office staff member you are working with, find the employee's name under the tab. You can also click on the staff member's email address and send a message.

Business Office Survey—What We Learned

Some of you may recall that the Business Office sent an email survey in the fall asking for input on our effectiveness and efficiency. We received 166 responses.

One of the purposes of the survey was to assess whether the revised structure in the Business Office to have one Business Office staff member responsible for all the fiscal activities of a unit has been successful. The majority of respondents indicated that they like having one contact for their fiscal needs.

The other purpose was to get your suggestions about how we can be more helpful. Many of you asked for more training, particularly with the new financial reports. As you know, we offered training in each of the regions in October and November 2001 and will continue to offer additional training (more on that later in the letter).

Changed method of charging county educator salaries to county funds

Please see the Human Resources Web Site for more on County Educator salaries. <http://hr.ag.ohio-state.edu/>

Ereports Training

The business office offered training in the Fall of 2001 in each region and on the Columbus campus. The feedback that we received at the end of each training was that the training was very helpful.

Now that you have had time to go back to your offices and try what was shown in the training, we'd like you to take the time to give us additional feedback. Everyone who attended our trainings will receive an evaluation via e-mail in the next few weeks. Please take time to give us your feedback; we'll use that to improve our future trainings. If you were not able to attend our training sessions, but would like a copy of the training manual, we can send you a copy for \$5. Send an email to Karen Oberrath_ with your chartfield information (organization and fund) or fax a 100W(614-688-0529).

Money Saving Ideas

At the recognition event in December, Jana Kent from Boise Cascade gave a presentation on how Boise can save you money. It is now possible to order on line from Boise. Please e-mail Jana Kent (jana.kent@boiseoffice.com) if you are interested in getting access to the on-line Boise catalog. Jana will be contacting offices in the next month to set up on-line access for those who wish. There is a significant price difference in remanufactured toner cartridges (not drill & filled) for Hp LaserJet 4000, IBM/Lexmark 4039 and Canon L760/770 when compared with competitors prices. Batteries and other items can also be found at much lower rates than competitors. All prices include shipping, and orders placed before 3 p.m. will be delivered to your office the next day.

Need another money saving idea--who's your long distance carrier? Qwest sometimes offers local and long distance service at reduced rates. To sign up for Qwest, call your business office representative (field offices only).

Regional computer specialists have been working with the Business Office staff to coordinate bulk computer purchases. Bulk computer orders will be processed for delivery in June and December. If there are other items you would like us to look into purchasing in bulk, please let your business office representative know.

East District Spring Conference

Marge Hall and Cindy Crawford attended the East District Spring Conference April 22, 2002.

Grants and Contracts

As the Coordinator, Resource Development and Management, Jackie LaMuth is available to help you become more skilled and successful in efforts to secure and manage external funding to conduct projects that fit organizational and local program priorities. She is ready to assist in defining the scope of services, identifying measurable project outcomes and strategies for evaluation, developing a comprehensive budget, and establishing timelines for the project and for meeting submission deadlines.

As you think about submitting a proposal for funding, she can help you evaluate the feasibility of a proposal idea, interpret proposal submission guidelines and requirements, understand the OSU processes for submitting proposals through the research foundation, and complete the steps involved in submitting a contract for services. She will proof read and edit proposals, and help you develop contract templates for projects that you use regularly.

Please check out the Grantsmanship Contract Development and Resource Development Home page at <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~grants/>.

Signing Contracts on Behalf of OSU

OSU employees are not authorized to sign contracts on behalf of OSU. Signing contracts on behalf of OSU could result in personal liability for satisfying the terms of such contracts.

Where to send contracts for signature depends on the nature of the contract. Here is some information to help you decide:

- Contracts associated with a purchase order or payment to a vendor for goods/services, e.g., hotel contracts, maintenance agreements, cell phone plans, etc. Work with your Business Office representative.
- Contracts associated with a grant or contract (when OSU is providing services to another agency)—send these to Jackie LaMuth 614-688-0529- Room 4 Ag Admin Bldg 2120 Fyffe Road
- Contracts for space or facility usages that do not include a purchase order—send these to the Assistant Business Manager in the Business Office.

And there's always an exception to any rule--Vehicle rental contracts for business travel can be signed by OSU employees (because these contracts are in the traveler's name). We suggest using your University PCard to pay for this rental. If you use the university PCard, the rental is tax exempt and you do not need to purchase extra insurance on your rental vehicle. Master Rental Insurance Coverage will apply. (this only applies for personal vehicle rentals, not to rentals where you will be transporting individuals, i.e. bus or van rentals)

PCard Renewals

All OSU PCards expire 4/30/2002. All Extension PCards will be picked up by the Business Office and distributed. If you have questions, please e-mail Karen Oberrath.

Closing Old Purchase Orders

Please review "Revenue and Expense Budget vs. Actual" (GLU007OS-90) report for a listing of all purchase orders for that chartfield combination. To find encumbrances or open purchase orders, look at the bottom of your GLU007OS-90.

Some questions to ask in determining whether to close the purchase order are: Is the term of the purchase order finished? Is the purchase order still being used?

Send an e-mail to your business office representative requesting that purchase orders be closed; be sure to include the complete purchase order. Personnel and benefits encumbrances cannot be closed until the employee has been terminated or transferred to another chartfield.

Unfortunately the accounting system will not automatically close purchase orders that have expired or have a small balance remaining so a periodic review and cleanup is necessary.

- APRIL 2002 Bottom Line -CC
- Edited for content clarification November 2004 -CT