



# Police Officers' Credit Union Association

June 30, 2015

Dear POCUA Members and Attendees of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Police Officers' Credit Union Conference,

I am pleased to report that our annual event last month in St. Louis was another success. Based upon the evaluations, our **overall combined conference score for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Police Officers' Credit Union Conference was 4.65 out of a possible 5**. That is up .08 from last year and up .09 from two years ago.

I infer that to mean that attendees are enjoying, and we are staying true to, our unique brand of

**1. Networking**

**2. Education**

**3. Fun**

That was certainly reflected in the following comment from the evaluations:

***"Best conference to date. You've incorporated previous recommendations and they are great."***

To that end I am happy to share the overall theme of the comments from this year's event and how I will personally plan for that feedback to translate into our program next year - the 13 Annual Police Officers' Credit Union Conference in Washington DC from Thursday, February 18 to Saturday, February 20 - so that your recommendations continue to be incorporated.

➤ ***Our score for networking during this year's program was the highest ever!***

The first question of the evaluation, "This conference provided an excellent opportunity to network with other police credit union professionals and volunteers," received a rating of 4.95 out of a possible 5. That is nearly a perfect score! This speaks to the fact that we are living up to the most important aspect of our brand.

Here are some of the comments regarding the networking opportunities:

- “Networking was awesome! A little too long, maybe (four sessions) would be better.”
- “Open networking was fantastic!”
- “Need bathroom breaks during Monday morning networking. Five groups was a bit much – especially with no break.”
- Approximately 30% of the respondents listed the Open Networking Session as the, or one of the, sessions that provided “the greatest value.”

#### **What does this mean for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Police Officers’ Credit Union Conference in Washington DC?**

- We will certainly include the Open Networking session at the beginning of the conference.
- We will try to keep it to four group sessions. However, the reason I schedule this semi-formal networking program at the beginning of our program is to create the optimum environment for people to meet and become comfortable with one another. I believe this allows for a much better flow of communication and collaboration throughout the program – thus, the continual high ratings and trend upward for networking. Therefore, I strive to create groups whereby an attendee can meet most, if not all, of the other attendees. Given the number of participants that may take more than four group sessions. Depending upon our attendance, and makeup of such, I will either keep the Open Networking to four group sessions or break it up in some fashion...and, yes, allow everyone to have a restroom break without missing out on a group session
- We will concentrate on networking primarily, if not solely, the first day. As we are trying a new approach in coupling our program with the GAC, we will begin in the early afternoon on Thursday, February 18. My hope is this will allow attendees to arrive in Washington DC on Thursday morning and not have to be away from the office on the Wednesday before. This will allow those that wish to attend the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Police Officers’ Credit Union Conference and the GAC to take one continuous series of days to attend two programs and save on travel costs and travel time. Therefore, since it will be a travel day for some we will concentrate on networking coupled with an upgraded reception to make the first portion of our event valuable but less intensive.

➤ **It is clear we need to take a close look at our #2 priority of education, including our agenda, our choice of speakers, and our format.**

While our rating for networking, as well as our combined score, increased from the prior year the feedback concerning the sessions and formats have been very mixed at best. Specifically the responses to the statement “The speakers during the conference were well-versed in their subject matter.” have decreased two years in a row – 4.60 in 2013, 4.53 in 2014, and 4.47 in 2015. Furthermore, the rating for statement three, “The subject matter presented was of value to you.” Decreased from 4.54 in 2014 to 4.26 this year.

A 6% decrease in the satisfaction of the education we provide is unacceptable. This is especially true given our main focus was on lending – generally one of the top three areas of subject matter of interest and need for credit unions.

Granted, as I stated above, the feedback was very mixed. For example, some of the comments were:

- “All sessions were informative and well done.”
- “I like the format.”
- “More of the same”
- “Keep doing what you are doing.”
- “This was the best year in terms of all sessions being helpful.”

Plus, attempting to provide educational value to a diverse group of executives and volunteers can be a challenge. However, as a consultant and trainer myself, the decrease in the positive response to the education offered during our annual event is intolerable and a trend that needs to be reversed.

While the increase in the overall rating for the program is pleasing, it’s obvious that our focus and prowess in providing the desired format for networking is keeping the satisfaction level high. We have consistently raised our scores in this area and there is no reason we cannot do the same for our educational sessions.

Some of the comments that made me take particular notice were as follows:

- “Cut the session time by about 15-20 minutes.”
- “Shorten dead time. Can be a two-day conference.”
- “Perhaps one less session per day; maybe a little shorter per session.”
- “Excellent job but each session could be 15 to 20 minutes shorter.”
- A number of people commented that the NCUA regulator session during the volunteer track was of little to no value.
- There were mixed opinions concerning a number of the sessions lead by our sponsors.

#### **What does this mean for the 13th Annual Police Officers’ Credit Union Conference in Washington DC?**

- We will plan to keep each speaker to 45-minute sessions. If we have a topic or subject that requires a more time we will try to keep the session as short as possible without diminishing the value of the curriculum.

- We will plan to start a little later on the Friday of the conference, possibly 10 AM. This would make all three days a little shorter than those of past events. It may also allow for executives to accomplish critical tasks and phone calls prior to the beginning of our program. A couple of the sessions were very poorly attended with only three to five attendees this year. Hopefully a later start would allow everyone to enjoy and be present for the conference barring an emergency of course.
- Some thought needs to go into the approach of allowing our sponsors to speak during the conference. In the past we have allowed sponsors to lead sessions. The strategy behind that was to provide timely education to our audience while also allowing sponsors to showcase their expertise in the endeavor of earning new business. The results on both counts have been very mixed. Part of the issue is while our sponsors may all be experts in their particular fields they aren't always experts in public speaking. I am strongly considering a model I have witnessed during other CU conferences whereby a sponsor is given five minutes for a commercial – in essence, a blatant sales pitch – and then introduces a speaker. This gives the sponsor exposure but also allows us to have a speaker deliver specific CU relevant content.
- Speaking of more CU relevant content, in order to improve our sessions I have begun conversations with industry experts and authors about presenting during the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Police Officers' CU Conference. Here are some specifics:
  - Brad Roteman – retired VP of Member Advocacy for Healthcare Systems FCU – has agreed to speak on the topic of *How to Position a Product as a Solution to a Human Want or Need*
  - Todd Romer – author of *Young Money* and founder of Young Money University – has been requested to speak on how credit unions can better attract and engage Millennials.
  - Given the highly positive remarks regarding the presentation done by Frank Diekmann of *CU Today* during this year's program, the editor of CU Times – Sarah Cooke – has been invited to speak during the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Police Officers' CU Conference.
- We need to consider a new approach to volunteer education. With the exception of Joe Ghammashi of Corporate One, the speakers during the Volunteer Track received few positive remarks. Plus, the Volunteer Track was added a few years ago in order to attract more board and committee members to the conference. With the exception of 2014, attendance of volunteers hasn't changed much. The spike in attendance among volunteers last year probably had more to do with the location – Las Vegas – than the sessions. Given that it takes more resources to develop and provide a separate track, that track is not being received in a highly positive fashion, and that the size of our conference may not warrant and support breakout sessions we will have to take a close look at this for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Police Officers' CU Conference. This will certainly be a topic of our next collaboration call.

➤ **Food costs for the conference continue to rise while the quality of such continues to be questionable.**

Part of our third brand priority of “fun” is offering quality food throughout the event. Over the past few years food quality has decreased while the cost has increased. Similar to our educational content, this is not a trend with which I am pleased. This has been expressed by attendees and is also my personal opinion. It’s been my observation, in managing this conference for over a decade, that since the Great Recession hotels are attempting to make a much greater margin on food and beverage by raising prices and service charges to a ridiculous level while also cutting corners on quality.

It’s also been my experience that both pricing and quality are much more favorable at restaurants than hotels. It would stand to reason that an establishment focused first on food, and not lodging, would provide better meals to a group. This was certainly the case during last year’s Fall Collaboration Session held at Harry Caray’s Italian Steakhouse.

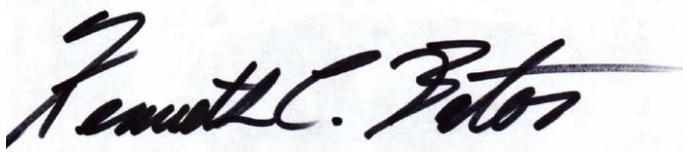
**What does this mean for the 13th Annual Police Officers’ Credit Union Conference in Washington DC and beyond?**

- This is one of the reasons we are negotiating with large restaurants with private rooms in Washington DC. For those who are more concerned with staying at a particular hotel chain or are looking for more economical lodging there are multiple options within a mile of the venues we are speaking with. This allows attendees to have a choice of lodging depending upon their needs and doesn’t require the dreaded minimum-hotel-block on our end.
- The formula of a quality restaurant near multiple hotel choices may be a favorable one for our conference. Overall our attendees like our event to be held in large cities where there are nightlife options and direct flights are more likely. Quality hotels in these locations generally will charge exorbitant prices not only for lodging but also for food and beverage. Case in point, in a recent conversation with the sales manager of a popular Hilton property in the Los Angeles area located near the ocean she stated that they charge \$69 a gallon for coffee, plus service charge and tax, for meetings. Finding a restaurant and hotel combination may allow us to hold our program in areas such as Miami, San Francisco, and San Diego without drastically increasing the cost of attendance.
- It’s clear that we missed the mark with our group-dinner location this year. Given the positive response to Battista’s in Las Vegas last year we tried to duplicate that experience this year with a fun and casual experience. Given that Maggie O’Brien’s seemed similar to Battista’s and was much closer to the hotel than last year we thought we had a winning combination. That certainly was not the case. Since we are trying something new next year by holding our event just before the GAC we will have a slightly shorter conference. Some attendees have asked for a shorter event so this may be welcomed but that leaves us less time options for a group dinner. What we are looking at is the possibility of, in essence, combining the group dinner with the

reception. This would mean a three-hour reception instead of two hours with not only more food but upgraded quality such as a carving station or the like.

Overall I am pleased with the response and the constructive feedback. We will not only continue to listen but also try to anticipate changes and needs as we plan for the future of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Police Officers' CU Conference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth C. Bator". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kenneth C. Bator

POCUA Co-Founder and Manager