My CFMA journey began in the fall of 1998 when Joe Stephens, my then-boss and president of the Middle Tennessee Chapter, invited me to a chapter luncheon. At the time, I was new to the construction industry, knew very little about construction financial management, and knew even less about CFMA. I was just excited for a free lunch at the Wildhorse Saloon!

That luncheon was significant for several reasons. The meeting location overlooked the future site of the stadium for the Tennessee Titans. This was an exciting time for Nashville as well as many of the area contractors that would get to work on and ultimately be a part of the project.

It was also personally significant for me because I met so many welcoming members from the chapter. During the drive back to the office, Joe and I further discussed the educational and professional growth opportunities that CFMA had to offer, and he asked me if I wanted to become a member. Between the people I met and the additional knowledge of how CFMA could help me in this new and exciting industry, my response was an immediate yes!

**Growth Opportunities**

Like many of you, my involvement and commitment have increased over the years, and with each step, CFMA has helped both my professional and personal growth.

Professionally, taking advantage of the many educational opportunities has helped me with cash, risk management, and financial statement issues. Attending conferences has introduced me to vendors that have helped me implement software and services to increase my company’s productivity and bottom line.

Personally, by attending Spring Creek, I’ve learned that change happens, you must adapt to change, and you must enjoy change. I’ve also learned to be proactive, to seek first to understand – then to be understood, and to continually sharpen the saw.

From being a chapter member to a chapter leader, a committee member to a committee leader, and an Executive Committee member to an Executive Officer, I have many family members, friends, colleagues, mentors, bosses, and companies to thank for encouraging me and challenging me to take the next step.

Though I can’t take the time here to thank everyone individually, I would like to thank Joe Stephens for encouraging me to get involved in the Middle Tennessee Chapter and Joe Turner, Glenn Graham, and Kirlin Carolinas, LLC for supporting me as a member of the Executive Committee and as an officer.

Leadership opportunities that have developed and bonds that have been formed from experiences like Spring Creek cannot be gained from a textbook or a one-day seminar.

On the 10th anniversary of my first Spring Creek retreat, I had the opportunity to attend both 2015 retreat sessions as Vice Chairman. Not only was it a great opportunity for me to meet chapter leaders, but it was also a chance for me to set the stage for the theme of this year’s Conference – “Building It Forward.”

**Building It Forward**

For me, Building It Forward means taking advantage of CFMA’s many professional and personal growth opportunities – the Annual Conference,
I challenged the Spring Creekers to commit to building their experience forward by utilizing something they learned during the retreat to make their companies or personal lives better. Many of them took that a step further by committing it in writing to me. We frequently keep in touch about their commitments and celebrate their successes. It has been awesome to see and hear firsthand how a CFMA experience is enhancing a member’s company or personal life!

I challenge each of you to do the same with something you learn at a luncheon, conference, or any of the many other educational opportunities CFMA offers. Committing to something and putting it in writing to someone who holds you accountable will ensure that what you gain from being a CFMA member will help you in Building It Forward.

Have you thanked your boss for affording you the time and resources to attend a conference or other CFMA event? Next time, take it a step further by committing to implement something you attained to enhance the company.

If you learn something that will boost your personal life, then commit it to your family or a friend. Share with them how you are planning on Building It Forward and then be sure to let them know when you actually do.

I am deeply humbled and honored for the privilege of serving as your Chairman for the coming year. I promise to work hard and utilize the collective wisdom and talent of the other officers, Executive Committee members, committee chairs, vice chairs, members, and our dedicated CFMA HQ staff.

I hope to see you at a CFMA or other industry event in the next year and beyond, and hear how your CFMA experience is helping you in Building It Forward.

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