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COMMON drives new education initiatives in Indianapolis

Spring 2003 Conference & Expo will offer 100+ new sessions

COMMON's Spring 2003 IT Education Conference & Expo, March 9-13 in Indianapolis, Indiana, features over 100 new sessions and several new

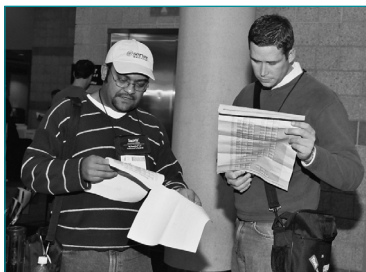
focus areas—all aimed at giving COMMON attendees a distinct advantage in the IT world. Following are some highlights of the Indianapolis conference.

The ABCs of Availability/Business Continuity

In response to worldwide conditions, COMMON is placing new emphasis on the Availability/Business Continuity (A/BC) Course of Study at the Spring 2003 Conference. Training in A/BC is crucial. If your system is disrupted, you could lose business, customers, and your reputation as a reliable supplier of services, information, or products. Safeguarding IT has never been more important than today.

Sessions in the A/BC Course of Study are centered on maximizing the availability of your critical applications. The education addresses key issues:

- Factors to consider with your disaster recovery plan
- Methods to help achieve continuous availability
- Techniques to test the potential effectiveness of your plans
- Ways to keep data available and applications running during a business or environmental disaster
- New alternatives in clustering and backup/recovery



Attendees revise their schedules on-site.

COMMON's A/BC curriculum includes sessions on the science of A/BC—providing a systematic approach to understanding and achieving the level of availability that is appropriate for your

organization. Also, high-profile A/BC experts will address such topics as the basic components of A/BC and how to protect against the effects of planned and unplanned outages.

In addition, third party providers will explain and demonstrate types of availability solutions. These vendor sessions help you understand different options on the market. They are part of COMMON's growing commitment to offer education by industry providers.

To learn more, go to www.common.org/abc

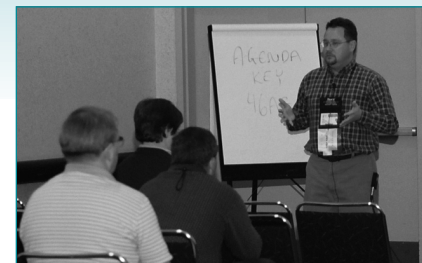
The financial aspects of manufacturing and distribution

In partnership with the IBM Small & Medium Business Group, COMMON is adding a business curriculum on financial issues in manufacturing and distribution. In today's economy, finance drives almost everything. You will learn how to align your IT infrastructure with your company's business objectives. Highly relevant business and financial sessions scheduled for Indy will cover:

- Strategies and solutions
- Inventory, revenue, and fixed assets
- ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)
- SCM (Supply Chain Management)
- CRM (Customer Relationship Management)
- e-business on-demand
- WebSphere, Connect for iSeries, B2B, and Java
- User case studies

Tell the business executives in your organization about this exciting new education.

To learn more, go to www.common.org/smb



COMMON speakers are experts in their field.

President's message



Bob Boyson

Why do long-time members like me participate in COMMON year after year? Because we get so much out of it! COMMON offers the best education, networking and professional development opportunities anywhere.

Also, COMMON is providing more year-round benefits than ever before, and these increase the value of your membership.

For example, most US members are now eligible for health insurance, arranged by JLT Services Corporation via eHealthInsurance. Almost anything can happen in our economy, so this health insurance could be just right for you. Go to page 3 and read more details on it.

In addition, members receive discounts on car rentals—courtesy of Avis. This will be especially beneficial if you're driving to our March 9-13 Indy conference, because you can put all those miles on an Avis car and save money. Learn more about the discount on page 3.

Preparing the curriculum for Indianapolis

Right now, many COMMON speakers are working to provide the widest range of quality education for the Indy conference. They're researching new solutions, getting answers from developers, and testing new technologies—all to help you optimize your conference time.

Because our speakers put so much into the 640+ COMMON sessions, you'll return from Indy with solutions that save your organization thousands of dollars. This will pay for the conference several times over.

To read session descriptions, go to www.common.org and click "Session Guide." I'm confident you'll find many sessions and labs you'll want to attend.

Build a Personal Grid schedule

While you're reading those session descriptions, you can build an online Personal Grid that maps all your time at the conference. Construct a Personal Grid even if you aren't registered, so you can show upper management how your organization can benefit from your attendance at COMMON in Indy.

Creating a Personal Grid is an excellent way to "rough out" a conference schedule for yourself—a schedule that automatically updates as your chosen sessions move or change. Personal Grids debuted at our Fall 2002 Conference in Denver, and were hugely popular with attendees.

To learn more about Personal Grids, go to page 9.

Malcolm Haines to speak at Opening Session

Top iSeries marketing expert Malcolm Haines has returned to IBM, and will speak at Opening Session in Indianapolis on Sunday, March 9. *Midrange Server* says Haines is "the imaginative marketer whose colorful and off-beat advertising campaigns won him respect from a hard-to-please AS/400 installed base during a 25-year career promoting products from Rochester." You'll want to see what Malcolm has to say at the Opening Session!

Make the investment in your future—register today

Attending COMMON in Indy will be one of your best investments ever, because your career success depends on education, certifications and personal contacts. COMMON will get you educated, trained, familiar with latest developments, and connected to those who count ... in just five conference days.

If you haven't signed up to benefit from COMMON in Indy yet, start your engines now! Complete the registration and housing forms found in this newsletter, or register online at www.common.org. Together we'll set the pace for the industry.

Bob Boyson
President, COMMON
Robert_Boyson@common.org

Take advantage of new health insurance benefits

If you are a qualified US COMMON member, you may be eligible for health insurance. Through an arrangement with JLT Services Corporation via eHealthInsurance, you can examine a number of different health plans and choose one that's right for you.

To learn more, go to www.common.org. Click on "health insurance," enter your COMMON ID and password, and you'll be connected to the eHealthInsurance site. Then make side-by-side comparisons of benefits and prices from the nation's leading health insurance companies.

Health plans you can shop for include:

For Individuals, Families and Students

- Medical
- Dental
- Short-term
- Medigap Plans for Seniors

For Small Businesses

Offering a wide selection of group health plans

Following is information from the company's Web site: "eHealthInsurance, the #1 place for purchasing health insurance online, markets individual and small group health insurance to the public. The company delivers the best customer experience for buying health insurance by offering the broadest selection of leading health plans, delivering unparalleled customer service online through licensed agents, and guaranteeing the best price. eHealthInsurance allows people to learn that health insurance is affordable and attainable."

The eHealthInsurance site even provides downloadable booklets on "Choosing and Using a Health Plan" and "Checkup on Health Insurance Choices." Their online services are complemented by over 100 representatives at a toll-free number.



Frequently Asked Questions

- Q.** *Are health insurance options available in my state?*
- A.** While available in most states, coverage options and plan availability will vary based on your state of residence. After choosing a Health Plan category ("Individuals, Families & Students," or "Small Businesses"), you'll be asked to fill in your ZIP code. Then you'll see which options are available to you.
- Q.** *There are so many companies available. How do I compare the quality of their service?*
- A.** The NCQA (National Committee for Quality Assurance) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to improving health care quality. They developed the only national report card that reviews hundreds of HMO, PPO, and PSA providers. A link to this report card is available through COMMON's Web site. Or go to <http://hprc.ncqa.org/index.asp>
- Q.** *How do I know if the insurance provider is financially sound?*
- A.** A.M. Best provides a financial evaluation of insurance carriers. You can access their information at <http://www3.ambest.com/ratings/healthcare/>
- Q.** *How can I gain a better understanding of health care insurance issues?*
- A.** The US Department of Health and Human Services provides useful information on this subject at <http://www.healthfinder.gov/>

Car rental savings for COMMON members

AVIS®

Over half of the US population lives one day's drive or less from Indianapolis. If you're driving to the Indy conference, take advantage of Avis car rental discounts for COMMON members. Pricing starts at \$23.99 a weekend day or \$152.99 for a week. (There are additional costs to consider, such as taxes and insurance.)

Deals are available on all types of cars, including sports utility vehicles and convertibles. Also, you can receive discounts at times other than during COMMON conferences. To take advantage of this special benefit, make your reservations through Avis at 800.331.1600 and mention Avis Worldwide Discount number T268799. Or go into the Members Only section of the COMMON Web site and click "Avis."

iSeries technologies to watch in 2003

By Sarah J. Kimmel

As we enter 2003, new iSeries technologies are surfacing and older solutions are just starting to catch on. Watch for these key iSeries technologies in the New Year:

“Shops should not just look at new technologies in 2003; there are also many current technologies that people are starting to implement,” says Pete Massiello, president, OS Solutions, Danbury, CT.

WebSphere Express. The pared-down Express version of WebSphere Application Server v5.0 will replace the free WebSphere Standard Edition v3.5 as it phases out at the end of 2003. Offered to iSeries shops for \$2,000 per CPU, Express will open the door for smaller shops to bring their businesses to the Web. Express is slated for availability in early 2003, but IBM has been mum on an official GA date.

Low-end Regatta. When Rochester announced the Model 890 in April, many small and mid-sized iSeries customers were left wondering why there was no mention of a lower-end Regatta server. The unannounced models, previously called the Model 52 L (low-end) and M (mid-sized), were originally slated to arrive with the iSeries Model 890 (formerly the Model 52 H, for high-end) (IW 4/15/02). Insider sources say that these lower-end models will appear in February 2003 (IW 11/25/02).

Computing on demand. Currently iSeries shops have the ability to add processors on demand and pay for only as much power as they need. Customers should expect to see this ability to add resources on the fly expanded to include additional resources like memory and 5250 Interactive.

As part of IBM's Project Eliza initiative to build self-healing servers, IBM will incorporate on-demand into its e-business strategy to integrate users with suppliers, partners, and customers.

AIX in an iSeries partition. In April 2002, Big Blue announced in a Statement of Direction that it plans to include native support for AIX in logical partitions alongside OS/400 partitions on the iSeries. IBM has not revealed a timeframe for this announcement.

While today, shops can run some Unix applications in the PASE environment on the iSeries, which is now free with OS/400 V5R2,

native AIX in a partition would allow customers to leverage a broader range of application environments and databases.

WebSphere Studio and IBM's e-business initiative. After repackaging the development tools in 2002, the WebSphere team in Toronto is planning to announce a new version of WebSphere Development Studio client (WDSclient) for iSeries at the end of January.

The WDSclient consolidates the workstation development tools for traditional and e-business application development and integrates them on the Eclipse-based WebSphere Studio Workbench.

“Look for IBM to continue leadership on e-business integration and solutions with WebSphere. Also, look to open software organizations like Apache and Eclipse for useful, innovative e-business software frameworks,” says Jim Mason, president, ebt-now, Plymouth, MA.

Wireless. Slow to adopt wireless technology, many iSeries shops are just starting to expand their knowledge in wireless beyond their cell phones and Palm Pilots. But as data transfer rates increase, wireless technology will be creeping into more iSeries shops.

“The 802.11a/b protocols are being enhanced to more readily support things like real-time streaming video and high-speed data, voice, and image transfer. Wireless will be even more ubiquitous in the near future than current cell phone technology is,” says Don Rima, founder, eserverusergroup.org, Herndon, VA.

Sarah J. Kimmel is Content Director for The 400 Group and Editor of Insider Weekly for iSeries Managers and iSeries 400 Experts Journal. Each week Sarah helps iSeries 400 managers make the best hardware, software, technology and migration decisions. Sarah provides analysis of new and upcoming iSeries 400 products/technologies, inside information on IBM's product plans, bugs, gotchas, pricing changes, user experiences and case studies to help thousands of managers maximize their technology investment. Her 100% independent unbiased research and advice earned her a 2001 Excellence in Service Journalism award for investigative reporting. She can be reached at sarahk@the400group.com

This article is reprinted with permission from The 400 Group. For more information on the iSeries trade publications offered by The 400 Group, see <http://www.the400group.com>

What is SPEX?

Learn what goes into the Speaker Excellence Awards

When you're looking at the Indianapolis online daily grid (go to the COMMON home page and click "Session Guide"), you may notice some sessions are designated with Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals. What are these awards, and what do they mean to you?

Conference attendees choose the recipients

COMMON started the Speaker Excellence (SPEX) program in 1994 to recognize outstanding speakers and sessions. Volunteers on the Speaker Excellence Committee oversee the process of awarding medals, but session attendees are the real decision makers. Attendees fill out evaluation forms, numerically rating each session on many aspects—including content, the speaker's ability to communicate, the speaker's knowledge of the topic, and the use of training aids.

SPEX Awards are given based on the attendees' responses. Gold Medal awards are presented to the sessions rated in the top 1%; Silver Medals go to those in the top 2%; and Bronze Medals are awarded to the sessions in the top 4%.

In addition, awards are given for...

- Best New Speaker
- Best New Session
- Best Traditional Lab
- Best Open Lab

To see a list of the award-earning sessions and speakers, go to COMMON's home page and click on the "Speaker Excellence Award Recipients" link in the left column.

The SPEX Awards from Fall 2002 in Denver will be presented to speakers at the Monday night Awards Banquet in Indianapolis.

Also during the Indy conference, each day's award-earning sessions will be printed in the *COMMON Conference Daily*, the onsite conference newspaper.

So, the next time you're looking for a COMMON session, take note of those that received Speaker Excellence Awards; previous attendees marked these as having high quality.

Speaker of Merit stars

Additionally, each speaker who earns an average 4.0 rating on at least one session is given a red star to designate him/her as a Speaker of Merit; watch for these red stars on the speakers' badges; COMMON is proud of the fact that dozens of the Indianapolis speakers have earned this distinction.

Use your "COMMON Cents" when booking an Indy hotel

Go through the COMMON Housing Bureau to reserve a room

When you sign up to attend COMMON's Spring 2003 Conference, don't stop after your conference registration is complete! Fill out COMMON's Housing Bureau form (either online or hard copy) to reserve a hotel room. Going through COMMON has three main benefits for you:

1. It's very convenient. You can see the hotels available, their distance to the Convention Center, and their rates. Select what you want and make your reservation. Nothing could be easier.
2. The "COMMON Cents" raffle will be repeated at the Indianapolis conference. So, if you book your room through the Housing Bureau, you can win valuable prizes! We had five lucky COMMON Cents raffle winners at the recent Fall 2002 Conference. Each received \$100 just for making reservations through the COMMON Housing Bureau.
3. Every room reservation made through the Housing Bureau helps COMMON fulfill our contractual commitments with hotels. In today's convention world, not meeting our room obligations can result in negative

financial consequences for the organization, and this increases costs for everyone. However, you can stay in a COMMON hotel and help keep costs low.

We're asking all attendees, exhibitors, and international guests to use their "COMMON Cents" and book their next COMMON conference hotel reservation online at www.common.org, or by filling out the hotel reservation form enclosed in this *COMMONews*. When you reserve your room through the Housing Bureau, your name is automatically entered in the "COMMON Cents" raffle.

COMMON Spring 2003 IT Education Conference & Expo Registration



Indianapolis, Indiana

Spring 2003 Conference • Sunday, March 9 - Thursday, March 13
Spring 2003 Expo • Sunday, March 9 - Tuesday, March 11

Register and become a member online at www.common.org
 You must be a COMMON member to attend this conference.

Is this your first COMMON Conference? Yes No

COMMON ID number _____

Last name _____ First name _____ Middle initial _____

Name as you would like it to appear on your conference badge _____

Company name _____

Address _____

City/State or Province _____ ZIP/Postal code _____ Country _____

Phone number _____ Fax number _____

E-mail address (required) _____ Medical emergency contact and phone number _____

Occasionally COMMON makes its database of names available to third parties. If you do not want COMMON to disclose your information, please check the box to the left.

Conference Registration Fees

The Early Bird Rate applies for registrations received with payment by February 4, 2003. Please allow adequate mailing time. Registrations received after February 4 will be processed at the standard rate.

Spring 2003 Conference Registration Fees (U.S.\$)	Early Bird Rate <small>(until 2/4/03)</small>	Standard Rate <small>(after 2/4/03)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual registration	\$1295	\$1495
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate group registration (10 or more individuals registering at the same time; per individual fee)	\$1095	\$1395
<input type="checkbox"/> One-day registration	\$395/day	\$395/day
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday <input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday		
<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday		
<input type="checkbox"/> Guest registration	\$95	\$95

Access only to Expo Hall, Opening Session, Spring 2003 Banquet, MOM, CUDS and Closing Event. Each guest must be accompanied by a paid attendee.

Guest's full name: _____

I want to attend the **Spring 2003 Banquet**
Complimentary to paid attendees and paid guests.

I want my registered guest to attend the Spring 2003 Banquet.

I want to take the **Indianapolis Motor Speedway Tour** **\$45**
Wednesday, March 12
 AM tour **PM tour**

Please accept my tax-deductible donation for the COMMON Education Foundation \$ _____

Total payment enclosed: \$ _____

Payment

Payment must accompany this form. Forms without payment will not be processed. Purchase orders will not be accepted as payment.

Check/Money order (payable to COMMON) American Express MasterCard
 Visa Discover Diners Club

Card number _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____ Name on card _____

Title or company responsibility:

- IS Executive (CIO, VP MIS) (02)
- IS Management (04)
- Non-IS Executive or Management (06)
- Professional/User (08)
- Other (12) _____

Are you an IBM Business Partner?

Yes (01) No (02)

Functional responsibility:

- Programmer/Analyst (01)
- Consultant (02)
- Internet (03)
- Systems Integrator (04)
- Technical Support (05)
- Administrative/Operations (06)
- Sales/Marketing (07)
- Other (10) _____

Primary industry affiliation:

- Finance/Accounting/Banking (04)
- Government/Process (05)
- Transportation (06)
- Distribution (Wholesale/Retail) (07)
- Education (08)
- Healthcare (09)
- Insurance (11)
- Manufacturing (15)
- Other (20) _____

Age:

- 18-24 35-44
- 25-34 45-54 55+

Additional information

Questions about registration or membership?
Call 800.270.8223 or 312.279.0192.

Keep a copy of your completed form. Fax or mail the original copy with payment to:

COMMON - A Users Group
Department 77-52110
Chicago, IL 60678-2110
Fax 312.279.0222

Advance registration will be accepted until **2/21/03**. Registrations received after this date will not be processed; on-site registration will be required.

Register for Labs separately beginning in late January at www.common.org.

Substitutions and Cancellations: If you cannot attend the conference, you may substitute another person from your company who is a COMMON member. Cancellation and substitution requests must be made in writing on company letterhead. Requests for substitutions and refunds are accepted until February 21, 2003. A processing fee of \$100 will be charged for all refunds, substitutions and cancellations.

000610

COMMON Conference Hotel Reservation Form

Deadline: Thursday, February 13, 2003

Spring 2003 COMMON IT Education Conference & Expo • Sunday, March 9 - Thursday, March 13 • Indianapolis, Indiana

Reserve your room online at www.common.org

Send Acknowledgment to (please print or type):

_____	_____
Last Name	First Name

Company Name	

Address/Department	

City and State/Province	

ZIP/Postal Code	Country
_____	_____
Phone Number	Fax Number
_____	_____
E-mail Address	

Room	
Occupants: _____	
Last Name/First Name	

Last Name/First Name	

Type of Room:

- Single: 1 bed/1 person Smoking
 Double: 1 bed/2 people Non-smoking
 Double/double: 2 beds/2 people

*Special request: Please indicate any special needs:

Room assignments and special requests are made on a first come, first-served basis. Please rank hotels from "1" (first choice) to "4" (last choice). Please mark the hotel NUMBER in the space provided. If your first choice is not available, you will be assigned to the next available preference.

Hotel _____ 1st choice _____ 3rd choice
 Preference: _____ 2nd choice _____ 4th choice

Arrival date: _____ **Departure date:** _____

Credit card information:

American Express MasterCard Visa
 Diners Club Discover

Card number _____ Exp. date _____

Signature

Please complete ONE hotel reservation request for each room reserved. (Photocopy this form as necessary.) Mail or fax completed form to:

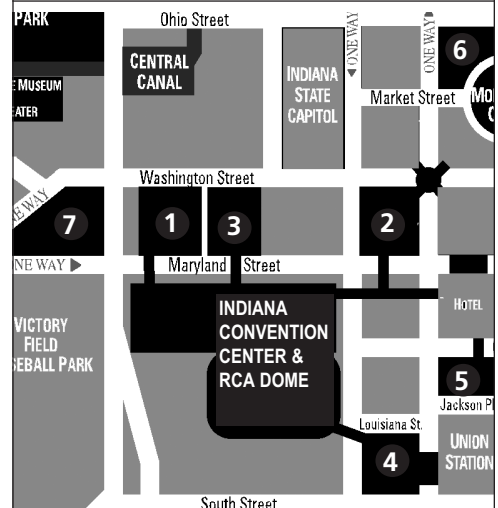
COMMON Housing Bureau
2450 Edison Blvd., Suite 2
Cleveland, Ohio 44087
Fax: 330.963.0319
Inquiries only: Please call 330.425.9330

Hotel	Single/Double	Distance to Ctr.	Frequent Traveler # (if applicable)
1. Marriott Downtown (Headquarters Hotel)	\$140/\$160	0 blocks	_____
2. Hyatt Regency	\$140/\$160	0 blocks	_____
3. Westin Hotel	\$136/\$156	0 blocks	_____
4. Crown Plaza Union Station	\$130/\$145	0 blocks	_____
5. Omni Severin Hotel	\$133/\$143	1 block	_____
6. Radisson City Center	\$129/\$139	5 blocks	_____

1. Marriott Downtown - by skywalk
2. Hyatt Regency - by skywalk
3. Westin Hotel - by skywalk
4. Crown Plaza Union Station - by skywalk
5. Omni Severin Hotel
6. Radisson City Center
7. Courtyard by Marriott Downtown

For details on amenities for each hotel, visit www.common.org/Conferences/conf

- Reservations must be received by the COMMON Housing Bureau no later than **Thursday, February 13**. Any cancellations/changes must be made in writing to the COMMON Housing Bureau on or before **March 3**. After March 3, please contact the hotels directly. TELEPHONE RESERVATIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED. All room cancellations will incur a \$15 per room processing fee. Requests to stay 2 or more nights pre/post COMMON's meeting dates may not be available.
- All rooms are subject to an 11% room tax per night and any additional per night occupancy tax.
- All hotels are handicapped accessible and offer handicapped/non-smoking rooms on first come, first served basis.
- **Standard check-in:** 3 p.m. Standard check-out: Noon
- **Shuttle service:** No shuttle service will be provided.
- **Confirmations:** COMMON's Housing Bureau will send an acknowledgement of your hotel reservation within 5-7 working days. You will receive an acknowledgement. Reservations made via the COMMON Web site will be confirmed within 48 hours.
- **Guarantee:** A first night's deposit is **required** to guarantee your reservation. Your credit card deposit may be charged to your credit card when the reservation is processed/received by the hotel. No-shows will be charged the entire deposit for the first night's stay. Do not send checks to the COMMON Housing Bureau. AFTER March 3, send check directly to hotel, noting the confirmation number you received on-line. All hotels require rooms to be guaranteed within 14 days of making the reservation. Hotels reserve the right to cancel non-guaranteed reservations. Early check-out fees may be assessed by some hotels. In order to obtain a deposit refund (less the \$15 processing fee), cancellations must be made 72 hours prior to arrival.



Get a free IBM certification test at the Spring Conference

Join the ranks of technical professionals who expand and promote their skills by earning eServer certification. As an added benefit, COMMON and IBM will offer each Indianapolis attendee a free certification test at the conference. All eServer certification tests will be available. Additional tests will be offered for \$95 each and must be taken during the conference.

Testing will be offered each day of the conference from 8 a.m. until the end of scheduled sessions for the day. (The Certification Lab will be closed during the iSeries Nation Town Hall Meeting on Monday morning.) On the last day, people will be seated only if there is enough time to take a test.

The time allowed for each test varies from 30 minutes to 2½ hours, depending on the topic. Drop by the Certification Lab to

find out the length of the test, so you can give yourself enough time for your selection.

Get ready to test

To prepare for testing, go to the IBM Certification Web site at www.ibm.com/certify. Also, you can take assessment tests on selected iSeries and AS/400 topics prior to taking the exam. Assessments are available at <http://testrac.com/ibm> for \$10 per test.

Certification provides you with...

- a portable credential—it travels with you
- accomplishment of a personal goal for technical achievement
- recognition from your peers, employer and industry
- a potential salary differential ranging from 14% (IDC 1996) to 30% (Lotus 1999)

Chatting with iSeries Nation Citizens

Check the schedule for upcoming calls hosted by IBM

iSeries Nation offers an ongoing series of teleconferences titled “Chatting with Citizens.” Citizens can dial into discussions and Q&As with top IBM executives.

Recent chats have included “WebSphere for iSeries—A Whirlwind of Exciting Announcements” and “Managing iSeries Security: A Must for Today’s Businesses.”

You must register for the calls in advance. To register, or for more information, go to www.ibm.com/eserver/iseries/nation and click “Chatting with Citizens” on the left.

It pays to complete conference and Expo evaluations

COMMON member Candace J. Hiner of Alaska Housing Finance Corporation in Anchorage, Alaska, won a Palm Tungsten T wireless device—a \$500 value—just for completing an online evaluation of the last COMMON Conference. All attendees who completed a conference or Expo evaluation for the Fall 2002 Conference were automatically entered in a drawing to win the Palm.

The drawing, created to encourage conference attendees to use the new online evaluation process, will be repeated for the Indianapolis conference. When you're at the conference, be sure to stop by the Cyber Corner or use your laptop to tell us what you thought of the event!

COMMON drives new education initiatives in Indianapolis (continued from page 1)

Working with WebSphere

WebSphere is today's most popular e-business integration solution, and the Spring 2003 Conference provides a great deal of WebSphere training. Choose from dozens of WebSphere sessions, and learn the best way to take your iSeries into the Web.

One-of-a-kind insights are shared by top speakers, consultants and practitioners—experts who've built hundreds of successful applications with WebSphere. These speakers work very hard to help COMMON provide a valuable service to the IT industry, and COMMON thanks them for their support.

Get in the driver's seat at our WebSphere computer labs and steer the technology yourself. WebSphere lab titles include:

- WebSphere Application Server, Install, Configuration & Security
- Developing Apps in an Open-Source J2EE Environment
- Hands on XML
- Web Applications using RPG IV and CGI

To learn more, go to www.common.org/websphere

A wealth of new sessions added

COMMON has added brand new educational sessions covering a wide range of subjects, from the hottest topics in the IT world—such as WebSphere and Linux—to the fundamentals that most COMMON members need—like OS/400 and backup/recovery. Following are some of the many new sessions.

Do you have the feeling your company has a security issue, but you don't know how to assess the problem? Speaker Carol Woodbury will present “**OS/400 Security—Help! Where Do I Start?**” to address this issue. This session provides the tools you need to assess your security situation, and it gives you a launching place. Attendees will learn about available security resources, get ideas on how to approach upper management, and understand how to determine if their company has a security issue.

“**Why WebSphere?**” is a foundation course to understand the goals and values of the WebSphere products. Speaker Kevin Larsen will discuss the Java 2 Enterprise Edition (J2EE) platform that's enabled with the WebSphere products, as well as the Model, View, Controller (MVC) architecture for leveraging WebSphere. He will highlight software providers who deliver products to supplement and extend WebSphere.

In “**What's Hot, New and Different for Backup/Recovery on iSeries and AS/400,**” you'll find out what you must know for the latest releases of OS/400 on the iSeries and AS/400 to ensure you have a good backup strategy. Learn what changes need to be made to update your disaster recovery plans. This session also takes you through some example backup strategies and the steps needed to recover your system after a system failure or disaster.

Everyone has heard of Linux. But how many sessions will you attend that provide real-world examples of how Linux and Linux-based applications, tools, and utilities can be used on your iSeries today? Speaker Kris Neely presents “**Linux for iSeries: What Applications & Tools Can I use TODAY?**” to provide those examples. You will discover dozens of ways in which Linux can help your iSeries shop become more effective! By the end of this session, you will be able to discuss how Linux can enable new applications on an iSeries, and you will have a starting point for Linux development in an iSeries arena.

Plan your Spring schedule...with an online Personal Grid

For the latest details on educational sessions, labs, Focused Education Roadmaps and more, visit www.common.org and click the link for “Spring 2003 Session Guide.” It will be updated regularly as the conference approaches.

In this section of the Web site, you can also create an online Personal Grid. This unique scheduler allows you to map out all your time at the conference. You don't have to be registered for the conference to create a Personal Grid. Just set up your account now and begin building your Personal Grid to determine how you want to use your conference time.

How Personal Grids work:

Browse the online Courses of Study, Focused Education Roadmaps, labs, sessions by speaker and the daily grids. When you find a session that interests you, click the “add” symbol. It will be placed into your Personal Grid.

If you select two sessions that take place at the same time, no problem—both appear in the grid. At any point, you can decide which session you want to attend.

Also, unlike the daily grids you may be used to, this one appears as a single grid, broken out by day. This makes printing easier and provides a single at-a-glance schedule.

Once you've populated your Personal Grid with educational sessions and special events, you'll receive a status message notifying you of any moves or other changes to the sessions you selected.

New! Use the search function in the Personal Grid section. It allows you to enter key words to find a specific session, topic or speaker.

Spotlight on education

Have you ever wondered how the educational sessions and labs for each conference are chosen and scheduled? It's through the combined efforts of several volunteer teams and two COMMON staff members: Dawn Soukup, Education Manager, and Nancy Johansson, Agenda Coordinator.

"Education is COMMON's product," says Nancy. "It takes a lot of people to put it all together."

The process starts with the Call for Presentations (CFP), which lets any COMMON member submit a description of a session they would like to present. The CFP is posted on the Web site many months in advance. For example, the CFP for the upcoming Spring 2003 Conference was placed online well before the Fall 2002 Denver Conference.

The Conference Education Team (CET) and Subject Matter Experts (SME)—all COMMON volunteers—choose the specific sessions that will be offered. "The CET is responsible for big-picture decisions, like changing Courses of Study," explains Nancy. "It's the job of the SME to review and decide which sessions should be offered. They consider content of the session, prior evaluations and attendance."

The Education staff then sends e-mails to speakers of all the selected sessions, letting them know which of their submitted sessions will be presented, and confirming their availability for the conference.

"Then we start scheduling the sessions," says Nancy. "We start about three months out from conference." Each of approximately 640 sessions is slotted into a specific hour and day. "I start by scheduling the Labs and Open Labs," Nancy says, "because there are only four Lab rooms—so there's a lot less flexibility for scheduling."

Nancy then schedules the Focused Education Roadmaps. Each includes a number of sessions that must be offered in a specific order, and some work in conjunction with Labs. Next, Nancy slots in those speakers who present many sessions, and then she completes the schedule with remaining sessions.

The CET and SME review the first phase of the schedule and, after any revisions, Nancy notifies each speaker of their timetable. This schedule can still change up to and during the conference—so the Education team continues to manage it carefully.

At the conference, the Education staff works out of the Agenda Office on many daily tasks. They provide education information to the *COMMON Conference Daily* staff. In addition, they post the latest schedule information to the Web site, and deliver necessary information to the Copy Center, Evaluation Office and IT Department.

Their onsite responsibilities also include printing and distributing signs identifying sessions for each room. Plus, they participate in numerous meetings with the CET, the SME and other committees. "Conferences are the only time the CET and SME get to meet face to face," says Nancy. "They use the time to talk about what's working and what's not working."

During each conference, they coordinate and run the "Ask the Experts" segment at CUDS (COMMON User Discussion Social).

Throughout the year, the Education staff works closely with the Speaker Excellence Committee (SPEX). They also assist with any education-related projects, such as the speaker handouts on CD, the Speakers Bureau, and Personal Grids. To help accomplish everything, they interact regularly with speakers. Their communications include the Call for Presentations, pre-conference e-mail reminders, post-conference thank-you letters, and the mailing for Speaker Excellence Medal recipients and Speakers of Merit.

The Education staff is also responsible for providing and/or reviewing all marketing information on education. For example, they help produce the Course of Study descriptions in the Advance Program. Along with that, they review any press release, Web page, etc., that focuses on COMMON education. Nancy maintains the Speakers' Corner section of COMMON's Web site, and she posts the session information for each conference.

"It's a lot of work, but I love my job," says Nancy. You can see Dawn and Nancy in the Agenda Office during the Indianapolis conference. Dawn will show you pictures of her new baby girl, born December 13, 2002!

About COMMONNews

COMMONNews is a quarterly publication of COMMON, the world's largest group of users of IBM information technology solutions. The organization comprises more than 4,000 individual and corporate members representing more than 22,000 IT professionals. COMMON strives to facilitate IT knowledge sharing, education, problem-solving and industry influence for the IBM user group community.

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Submit your comments and topic recommendations to common@common.org

Volunteer spotlight

Bonnie Nakashian

Consultant, Management
Information Technology

Pinehurst, North Carolina

How long have you been a COMMON volunteer?

Since my first COMMON Conference—1977 in Chicago. They twisted my arm right away! At the time it was a small group, only about 350 attendees. I knew almost everyone in the organization my first few years.

Describe the types of COMMON volunteer activities you've participated in.

I don't know what I haven't done! I've been a session manager and a session monitor, a project manager (kind of like managing a Course of Study), a speaker, served as Requirements Committee coordinator, handled local arrangements (what are now called LUGs), been on the Nominating Committee and served as Agenda manager, doing what the Education staff does now. I was also on the Board. Currently, I volunteer as part of the onsite registration team, handling volunteer and speaker registration, and I'm on the Education Foundation Committee.

What has volunteering meant to you?

I've contributed to COMMON's success—particularly in the past before there was paid staff. In those days, I was putting in two or three days a week volunteering for COMMON.

Also, I've made a lot of friends. Over the years, I've met hundreds, maybe thousands, of members. It helped me professionally to have friends with diverse backgrounds—and we had lots of opportunities to talk directly with IBM. I could pick up the phone to call someone at IBM or another COMMON volunteer and ask questions.

How do volunteers contribute to the success of COMMON?

Volunteers help reduce the costs that COMMON would otherwise incur. We help the organization because we have specific industry knowledge and experience to share—especially in education.

What advice do you have for potential COMMON volunteers?

Jump in and start volunteering! You'll feel like part of the organization, and you'll be giving something back. You can volunteer as much or as little as you like. Come and help us stuff registration bags at the next conference—it's fun!

What's your technical background? How did you get involved with IBM midrange computing?

When I first joined COMMON, I was a programmer. Today, I'm not as technically oriented, by my choice. I've shifted my career after 20-odd years to become more of a manager. I stay involved in COMMON because I can bring valuable learning and resources back to my company to share with the tech people.

What do you do for fun?

I live in Pinehurst, NC—one of the most prestigious golf cities. I play golf, and I also volunteer at the professional golf tournaments here. They have me doing a little of everything—registration, handling on-course food and beverage, and scoring.

I also like gardening, cooking, and some crafts. And taking care of my husband, Gary, and my folks who moved down here.



Tour the Indianapolis Motor Speedway!

If you're a racing fan, you must take this unique tour. Thanks to the generosity of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Spring 2003 Conference attendees can get a special behind-the-scenes look at the IT technology that runs the Indy 500.

There will be two tours on Wednesday, March 12. The morning tour will take place from 8 a.m. to noon, and the afternoon tour will last

from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The cost is \$45 extra per conference attendee, and space is limited. Sign up on the registration form. If you've already registered for the Indy conference and want to take a tour, call COMMON Membership Services at 800.270.8223.



Attend COMMON in Indianapolis, March 9-13!

Register before February 4, 2003 and enjoy Early Bird savings.



Registration is only \$1,295 before February 4, so hurry! Fill out the registration form inside, or sign up online at www.common.org.

Now more than ever, education, networking and certifications are vital to your career success. Attend COMMON and get everything you need in one place.

We hope you can join us in Indy and at other upcoming COMMON Conferences.

COMMON IT Education Conference & Expo

Spring 2003

March 9-13, 2003
Indianapolis, Indiana

Fall 2004

October 17-21, 2004
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Fall 2003

September 7-11, 2003
Orlando, Florida

Spring 2005

March 13-17
Chicago, Illinois

Spring 2004

May 2-6, 2004
San Antonio, Texas

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