



# *Parish of Ascension*

OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT

TOMMY MARTINEZ  
Parish President

## **Parish Finance Department Wins Industry Award**

**Contact: Lester Kenyon (225) 621-5753; E-mail: [lkenyon@apgov.us](mailto:lkenyon@apgov.us)  
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GONZALES –The Ascension Parish Finance Department received the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for this year’s budget.

Chief Financial Officer Gwen LeBlanc and her staff were presented with the award during the Ascension Parish Council meeting on Sept. 20. Clay Stafford, president-elect of the Louisiana Government Finance Officers Association, made the presentation. Stafford is also city clerk/finance director for the City of Gonzales.

“I’m happy to report that my first assignment as president is to present the award to my home parish and I’m very proud of that,” Stafford said.

Ascension Parish President Tommy Martinez also congratulated LeBlanc and her staff.

“Our finance department is again being recognized for excellence,” President Martinez said. “We are proud of the job they do for our parish residents.”

LeBlanc complimented project team leader Dawn Caballero and the Finance Department staff for the budget presentation.

“I have a great staff and they do a great job, each and every day,” LeBlanc said. “I would like to accept this award on behalf of the Finance Department and Ascension Parish Government. With the support of Parish President Tommy Martinez and entire parish

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council, this award reflects the commitment of our department to achieve the greatest principals in governmental accounting.”

According to a media release from the GFOA, the award represents a significant achievement by the entity and reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting.

In order to receive the budget award, the entity had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for an effective budget presentation. These guidelines are designed to assess how well the budget serves as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide and a communications device.

Stafford said the GFOA established this award in 1984 and that each budget document submitted to the program is evaluated nationally by three separate reviewers who rate the documents on 27 different types of criteria.

“You must be rated outstanding on at least 14 of those criteria to qualify for this award,” Stafford said. “Just like any accounting document, the true measure of a budget document is its usefulness in assisting the decision makers of a government in making decisions based on sound data. Creating an easy to read budget is essential to meeting growing public accountability and to promoting effective use of a government’s financial resources.”

Stafford said since 1984, only 208 parish or county governments have received this national award. Presently, there are more than 3,000 counties/parishes in the U.S., records show.

Stafford cited Cobb County in the Atlanta, Georgia area and Irvine, Texas as past winners.

“This is a big city-type of award,” Stafford said. “Within the state of Louisiana, only six parishes have ever won this award including East Baton Rouge, Caddo, Iberville, Jefferson, Terrebonne and now Ascension Parish.”

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Members of the Ascension Parish Finance Department were presented with a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award during the Sept. 20 parish council meeting. From left to right: Clay Stafford, president-elect of the Louisiana Government Finance Officers Association and city clerk/finance director for the City of Gonzales; parish Chief Financial Officer Gwen LeBlanc; Dawn Caballero; Jamie Villnerve; Ascension Parish President Tommy Martinez; Ann Falcon; Dorlane Krieger; Val Cummins; Theresa Poche'; Ashley Barnes; Charlotte White; Carol Celestine; Janice Brown; Amanda Berot; Laurie Lemoine; Joan Shivers; Sherri Bellina; Lynda Timmons and Toni Ourso.

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