

The Birmingham Large Users Group (BLUG)

Training Cooperative

MEMBER INVITATION AND INFORMATION

WEBSITE: WWW.BLUG.INFO

The Birmingham Large Users Group (BLUG) – Training Cooperative

Below you will find a brief history of BLUG and details on how you can benefit from belonging to a training cooperative in Birmingham.

PURPOSE

The primary goal of BLUG membership is to provide:

- low-cost, high-quality education
- cooperative pricing
- localized training venues
- qualified, certified instruction

HISTORY

On February 4, 1981, the Birmingham Large Users Group, Inc. (hereafter referred to as BLUG) requested that a representative from each member company be selected and that they meet on a regular basis to organize and schedule classes locally in an environment that would be beneficial to the BLUG member companies.

On February 11, 1981, the Education Committee met for the first time.

The charter members were:

| | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Kathy Merrill | AmSouth |
| Darlene Thompson | BellSouth |
| Eddie Thomas | Blue Cross |
| Delana Williams | Central Bank/Compass |
| Bob Evans | Dyatron |
| Tom DeWine | J.W.C.S. |
| Ronnie Muro | Liberty National |
| Dennis Yancey | SouthTrust |

The BLUG current membership roster can be found at: www.blug.info, see *Member Companies*.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Member companies of the Birmingham Large Users Group, Inc. are urged to send a representative to the BLUG Education and Executive Committees.

- Representatives are urged to attend the BLUG Education Committee meetings regularly.
- Representatives are urged to participate in the work of the committee.

Participation in the committee meetings allows for a broader and more inclusive discussion of member company training needs, thus allowing BLUG to offer training that is relevant, timely, and affordable.

It is not the intent of the BLUG committee as a whole or any single BLUG company to make a monetary profit from the efforts of the BLUG Education Committee. Therefore, all payments for BLUG supported classes will be made to BLUG and appropriate disbursements will be made by the BLUG Executive Committee treasurer when requested with supporting documents.

COURSES AND FEES

- As a cooperative, BLUG focuses on acquiring low-cost, high-quality, certified instructors using local venues.
- By acting as a cooperative, BLUG is typically able to negotiate a lower rate and provide overall savings by combining member company attendees and reducing travel costs by localizing the training venue.
- Generally, course attendance is limited to BLUG member company employees.
- For BLUG member companies: courses will be billed at an evenly divided fee.
- The member that provides a facility for a specific class is given 1 free seat in that class.
- In rare situations where courses are opened to non-BLUG companies, they will be billed at a fee agreed upon by the BLUG Education Committee.

COST SAVINGS

Membership in BLUG provided the following savings in training costs when the cost for BLUG sponsored classes were compared with standard training and travel costs for a typical class:

In 2010, BLUG members had an overall savings in training that totaled: \$121,111.00

COMMITTEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive committee meets for lunch eight months of the year, September thru May, excluding December, on the 3rd Thursday of the month, at noon. The meeting is fairly informal. Business is conducted as needed, and commonly consumes a small amount of time. Discussion customarily centers around common interests, including management and technology issues, trends, vendors, and the IT community.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The BLUG Education Committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m at Old Overton Country Club.

The members of the committee rotate the responsibilities of chairperson and recording secretary. Certain other special responsibilities are on “special assignment” and do not rotate. These responsibilities are also listed on the assignment schedule.

The primary purpose of the group is to arrange and facilitate low-cost, high-quality training for its members. As a result, the primary business of the meetings is to discuss and handle arrangements for this training. Once a class is picked to be scheduled, one of the members is nominated to coordinate the class.

During each meeting, the chairperson directs discussion of all classes in the scheduling process, brings up classes to be scheduled, and guides discussion of the results of past classes. The recording secretary takes minutes, which will later be mailed to each Education Committee member as well as each Executive Committee member.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

A Network and Operations Committee meets from time to time to discuss matters common to network and data center operations managers.

CONTACTS

NEW MEMBERSHIP

Please feel free to contact us anytime online at www.blug.info, simply click on the '[Apply for Membership](#)' link provided on the main page.

As well, you can contact us directly via email at bhamblug@gmail.com.

You can also reach us by phone by calling the current Education Committee president or secretary:

Bill Laughlin, University of Alabama at Birmingham – 205-975-2976

Blake LeCroy, Blue Cross of Alabama – 205-220-2712