

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AGA to Present Certificates of Excellence in Accountability
Reporting to Seven Federal Agencies Sept. 12**

Alexandria, VA - The Departments of the Interior, Labor and State, along with the General Accounting Office, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Social Security Administration and Patent and Trademark Office will receive AGA's prestigious *Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting* on September 12, 2003. Receiving the Certificate of Excellence represents a significant accomplishment for a federal agency and its management.

Comptroller General of the United States David M. Walker, CPA, head of the GAO, and SSA Commissioner Jo Anne Barnhart plan to attend the awards ceremony, along with Robert Shea, counselor to the deputy director for management, OMB, who will share some thoughts on the CEAR Program and its contributions to federal performance and accountability.

This year, 12 federal agencies participated in a review of their fiscal year 2002 Performance and Accountability Reports, with the CEAR reviewers and Board members finding seven reports to be outstanding. Of particular note was the way the "excellent" reports used the agency head letters to comment on the completeness and reliability of the reports performance and financial data, used the reports' Management's Discussion and Analysis to highlight the most important performance goals and measures, and presented the agencies' status in regard to the President's Management Agenda.

The digest version of the Department of State's Performance and Accountability report also placed No. 4 in the League of American Communications Professionals' (LACP) 2002 Vision Awards Annual Report Competition.

Chris H. Flagg, deputy chief financial officer of the Department of State, credits AGA's CEAR Program for helping the department to excel. "I'm not sure I could find a better performance measure of the tremendous impact your efforts and the CEAR Program have had on Performance and Accountability Reporting," he said. "From State, our sincere thanks for your vision, hard work and pioneering efforts that have allowed federal agencies to achieve in a very short timeframe what others have had decades to perfect."

Now in its sixth year, the CEAR program continues to help agencies meet the requirements established by the Reports Consolidation Act and OMB to produce a combined Performance and Accountability Report, bringing together both financial and performance information to not only provide a complete picture of performance relative to objectives, but the costs associated with such performance. The objective is to help both ordinary citizens and leaders evaluate government programs and their costs.

With reporting deadlines shifting to 45 days after fiscal year end, CEAR Program Technical Director Harold I. Steinberg, CGFM, expects the program to be even more valuable to federal agencies in the future. "For federal agencies to integrate all the necessary material and make the reports inviting, readable, informative and transparent was difficult when agencies had five months to do so," he said.

“For fiscal year 2004, agencies will have only 45 days. With extremely tight timeframes ahead, the CEAR Program’s rigorous review is even more valuable.”

AGA, along with others from the government performance and accountability communities, federal agency representatives, and the teams of individuals primarily responsible for producing the award-winning reports, will celebrate the accomplishments of these seven agencies and present them with special awards to honor their outstanding efforts. The awards ceremony will be held from 10 a.m. to Noon, September 12, 2003, at the Library of Congress.

If you would like to attend the event, or if you would like further information about the CEAR Program, please contact Lisa Thatcher, director of the CEAR Program, at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 212, or lthatcher@agacgfm.org.

The AGA is a 16,000-member professional association devoted to meeting the continuing professional education needs of accountability professionals at all levels of government, the private sector and academia. For more information about the Association, or the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) Program, call 800.AGA.7211 or visit www.agacgfm.org.

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