

AGA Presents Certificates of Excellence to Seven Federal Agencies

The fifth annual CEAR Program Awards Ceremony hosted by AGA on Sept. 12, 2003 at the Library of Congress was a huge success with nearly 150 people on hand to celebrate government accountability, including Comptroller General of the United States David M. Walker, CPA, Social Security Administration Commissioner Joanne Barnhart and others.

Other guests of honor included representatives from the seven federal agencies that received this year's *Certificates of Excellence in Accountability Reporting* for their fiscal year 2002 Performance and Accountability Reports (PARs). They are the Departments of the Interior, Labor and State, the General Accounting Office, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Patent and Trademark Office and the Social Security Administration.

Robert Shea, counselor to the deputy director for Management at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), shared his thoughts about how useful PARs can be when they are clearly written and presented.

Pat McGinnis, president and CEO of the Council for Excellence in Government sent well wishes. "I know that AGA has been recognizing the highest quality annual financial accountability reports from government agencies for some years," she said. "I believe that effort has

played an important role in raising the quality and usefulness of those reports."

Walker announced at the event that in addition to receiving AGA's CEAR, GAO ranked first on the Mercatus Center's performance reporting evaluation scorecard program.

The awards ceremony gave AGA a public opportunity to acknowledge the 48 dedicated professionals who served as the program's reviewers. These individuals dedicated 20 hours of their time to reading reports and developing recommendations for strengthening the reports' structure and content.

The event yielded some outstanding publicity for AGA and the CEAR Program as two agencies brought their official photographers, one brought its press liaison and a reporter from *Government Executive* magazine attended. The *Government Executive* story about the CEAR Program can be found at www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0903/091203a1.htm.

AGA's Immediate Past National President William J. Anderson Jr., CGFM, who emceed the event, told the crowd that AGA is progressing rapidly and successfully through the Pilot Year of its performance reporting initiative for state and local governments—the Certificate of Excellence in Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) Reporting. The pro-

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The General Accounting Office Team



The Nuclear Regulatory Commission Team



The Department of Labor Team



The Patent and Trademark Office Team

CEAR AWARDS CEREMONY

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gram is designed to encourage state and local governments to produce effective SEA Reports. The COE in SEA Reporting Program is a three-year Sloan Foundation-funded initiative.

It is gratifying to see the CEAR Program having a real effect on the quality of PARs, and the awards ceremony was a true celebration of this accomplishment. We were pleased to welcome friends, colleagues and association representatives as well as nonprofit and private sector partners who administer like-minded programs that help government operate better. Each one of these first-class organizations is shaping dialog and moving government toward improved management and better performance.

Helping the government effectively communicate its results is a crucial part of our Association's efforts to advance government accountability. Just as each person in that room doing is their part to serve, each of you—through your daily work, participation in chapter events, research, attendance at conferences and continued education efforts—are contributing to the solution.

Fiscal year 2003 Performance and Accountability Reports are due to AGA by March 1, 2004. For details, visit the AGA website at www.agacgfm.org/performance/cear for complete program information or call Lisa Thatcher, director of the CEAR Program, at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 212, or via e-mail at lthatcher@agacgfm.org. ■ —by Lisa Thatcher



The Social Security Administration Team



The Department of State Team



AGA Officials Celebrate CEAR—(Back row left to right) John H. Hummel, CGFM, chair of the CEAR Board; AGA National President Jullin Renthrope, CGFM; Immediate Past National President William J. Anderson Jr., CGFM; and Harold I. Steinberg, CGFM, technical director for AGA's CEAR and SEA Programs. (Front row, left to right) Past National Treasurer and current National Executive Committee member Eva J. Williams, CGFM; Lisa Thatcher, director of the CEAR and SEA Programs; and National Treasurer Evelyn J. Brown, CGFM.



Accepting the Certificate of Excellence—Comptroller General David M. Walker, CPA, accepts the CEAR on behalf of GAO.



Department of the Interior Representative—Nina Rose Hatfield, deputy assistant secretary, Budget and Finance, with AGA National President Jullin Renthrope, CGFM (left), and CEAR Board Chair John H. Hummel, CGFM.