



February 2002
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CEAR Participants Extol the Value of AGA's Process in Promoting Federal Accountability

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) still has a long way to go before it can even be in the running for AGA's Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR), awarded each year to federal agencies that produce outstanding Accountability Reports.

Even though USAID has never had an unqualified auditor's opinion on its financial statements, and is therefore not eligible for the Certificate, Chief Financial Officer Michael Smokovich, CGFM, continues to participate in the program every year, sending staff to AGA's training event and offering reviewers for the program.

Why? By Smokovich's own admission, USAID was considered one of the most poorly managed agencies in government.

"When I came in, I was looking around at anything and everything we could do to improve our actual condition and the perception about how good or how bad we are," said Smokovich, who

came to USAID from the U.S. Department of the Treasury about three years ago. "In Washington, perceptions are everything."

The agency's eagerness to get an unbiased assessment from AGA's expert reviewers is one way to demonstrate that the agency is committed to improvement, he said.

And Sandra Malone-Gilmer, chief of USAID's Management Innovation and Control Division, said the agency has improved its Accountability Report significantly from one year to the next. AGA's half-day Accountability Report Preparer's training event helps tremendously, as does the ability to read the other agencies' reports and learn from them, she said.

"I think we get our money's worth," she said. "Even though we have not received the Certificate, we do get publicity for the improvements we're making, and we get the benefits of the training." Five staff members per agency can attend the training and learn

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New CGFM Went All Out to Become Certified

Like many dedicated financial managers, Mary Catherine Graham was motivated to earn the CGFM, but few can match her drive to pass all three exams quickly.

Graham, the financial manager for the FBI's Los Angeles field office, saw a job posting for a deputy assistant director of the Finance Division—a coveted headquarters position. The CGFM credential was listed as a "desirable qualification." That was on Aug. 2. By Aug. 8, Graham had signed up for AGA's online course, *The Governmental Environment*, the first in a series of three courses that prepares candidates to take the CGFM Exams. When she completed the application for what she hoped would be her new job, she wrote that she would earn her

CGFM credential by November at the latest—and she achieved her goal a month early. Shortly thereafter, another FBI senior executive service position, budget officer, was posted and also listed the CGFM as a desirable qualification.

After passing the first exam, she flew to Washington, D.C. to take Course 3, *Governmental Financial Management and Control*, on Sept. 6 and 7. A few days later, she took that exam and passed. She also attended Course 2, *Governmental Accounting, Financial Reporting and Budgeting*, on Sept. 10, but she was only able to take one hour of the second day of the class. The terrorist attack on the Pentagon abruptly interrupted the class, as her hotel was evacuated, and the course had to be rescheduled. She

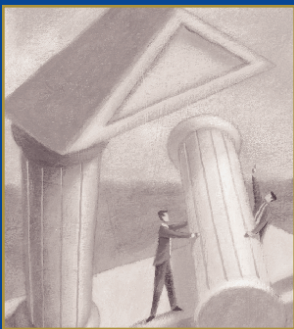
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Come to Atlanta and Be Transformed!

Overcoming Hurdles to Get Things Done for AGA

As I continue to discuss leadership strategies from the book *Leading at the Edge*, I see more and more how these strategies work so well in our Association. This month I will talk about minimizing status differences, and promoting courtesy and mutual respect. I will also discuss managing conflict.

Courtesy and Respect

Many of us have been working these past few months on a team. This team could be a chapter committee, regional coordinator group, regional vice president team, national committee, or board or task force. We learn from working together how much can be accomplished as a team, and the teams that are most successful have a common characteristic: a core value of mutual respect and courtesy for each other. Although any unit must have an organizational structure with the need for legitimate authority and various subordinate positions, each person should experience a basic sense of respect, regardless of his or her role in the unit. By caring about the feelings of others, individuals can connect and work together as an effective team that can deal with the issues and problems it might face.

I believe your National Executive Committee (NEC) is one example of how a core value of mutual respect and courtesy for each other works. We came together a few months ago as a committee of 15 individual leaders, with several members having prior service and six serving as new members. As individuals we all have ideas and opinions about how to deal with the many tough issues facing our Association today. In discussing these issues, all members have an opportunity to express their points of view. No matter how intense the discussion, everyone's opinion is respected. This atmosphere of respect creates an environment where everyone can contribute to the ultimate solution.

Managing Conflict

Conflict is a part of any organization. You should not be concerned

about eliminating conflicts, but rather about managing them in a productive way. If conflicts are allowed to go unresolved, they will become a source of tension. We've all attended meetings in which everyone leaves smiling but the "real" issues are discussed in the hall or outside the door.

How should you manage conflict? First, create an open environment in which conflict can be expressed and explored. If conflict is not expressed directly, it will surface in some other nonproductive way. Second, create an effective process that allows team members to talk about their differences and identify problems that need to be addressed and resolved. Keep individuals engaged in the decision-making process.

I believe these leadership strategies served us well as we revised our Chapter Recognition Program.

Chapter Recognition Program

This past year during the annual Leadership Training Workshop, we had considerable discussion about the Chapter Recognition Program and suggestions about how to improve it. As a result of that discussion, a Chapter Recognition Program (CRP) Project Team was appointed in March 2001 for the purpose of reviewing the program and developing recommendations for its improvement. The project team had a very difficult assignment with many diverse viewpoints among our membership on how the program should work. Every detail and aspect of the program was examined.

The project team's report was accepted by the NEC in September, and a work group of the NEC was asked to study the 2002-2003 CRP proposal and report back to the NEC at the December meeting. I am very pleased to report that the NEC approved the revised program for exposure to the National Board of Directors (NBD). After considering input on the final proposal, the NEC is scheduled to approve the 2002-2003 CRP for presentation at the Leader-



Richard V. Norment, CGFM, CIA

ship Training Workshop on March 9-10, 2002.

Leadership Training Workshop

This workshop is one of our Association's most important annual events, where we bring together our national and regional leaders to hear about our accomplishments in the current year and plans for the coming year. More important, this workshop is where AGA's leadership will have an opportunity to come together as a team. It is another occasion where all of the leadership strategies that I have discussed must be applied if we are to have an effective group of leaders. We should leave this two-day workshop with a lot of focused energy and be ready to implement our plans to keep AGA moving ahead. That means accomplishing short-term goals while remaining vigilant about achieving our ultimate goal of advancing government accountability.

I close with some personal thoughts about my recent travels to chapters around the country. I have really enjoyed these visits and the opportunity to participate in chapter activities, such as luncheon presentations or educational events. I hope to provide more details later this year after I have completed most of my chapter visits. But I want to mention now how impressed I am with the work going on in the chapters, which directly benefits our membership. The educational events, with top speakers on timely topics, are outstanding. Even during these difficult economic times for

President, continued on next page

STANDARDS

Auditing Council Discusses Independence

The Advisory Council on Government Auditing Standards has discussed the more than 600 comment letters received on the May 2001 Exposure Draft on *Independence*.

Comments were generally supportive on the issue of organizational independence, and the council at its Nov. 19 meeting agreed on two changes that were brought up during the comment period. For one, the council agreed to delete paragraph 3.23c, which proposed expanding the presumptive criteria for organizational independence. Second, the council continued to agree with the Exposure Draft's proposed treatment of the military service auditors general as internal auditors.

As far as the nonaudit services issue, the council agreed that the standard should lay out both a principles-based approach and safeguards that should be applied when providing nonaudit services.

The four principles are:

- Auditors should not perform management functions or make management decisions for their clients;
- Auditors should not audit their own work as part of an ongoing or future audit;
- Auditors should not reduce the audit work performed based on the nonaudit work performed below a level that would have been reasonably performed by another auditor; and

- Auditors should consider the significance/materiality of the nonaudit service and its relevancy to the auditors' independence in providing audit services.

The council also agreed on the proposed safeguards, which would require auditors to establish an agreement with management on each nonaudit service provided and maintain audit documentation of that agreement and its implementation. The audit organization would also stop those who provided the nonaudit service from participating in the audit. Auditors also could not reduce the audit work based on the nonaudit work performed below a level that would have been reasonably performed by another auditor. Auditors would also be required to identify all related nonaudit services to the audit organization's peer reviewer and to make audit documentation available for inclusion in the peer review.

The council suggested that two types of nonaudit services could be provided by the auditor without impairing independence, as long as the safeguards were in place and full disclosure was included in the auditor's report. These services are: posting transactions to the entity's general ledger for which entity management has coded the transactions for the account and providing certain payroll processing services.

The council also has recommended to Comptroller General of the United States David M. Walker that the current draft of Government Auditing Standards be issued as an Exposure Draft. ■

PDC Technical Group Announces Keynoters

The PDC Technical Committee, chaired by John E. "Jack" Carson, CGFM, has announced several confirmed keynote speakers for AGA's 51st Annual Professional Development Conference & Exposition. *Transforming the Government Enterprise* is set for July 7-10, 2002, in Atlanta, GA.

Keynoters include Comptroller General of the United States David M. Walker; Office of Personnel Management Director Kay Coles James; Dr. Alan R. Zimmerman, CSP, professional motivational/leadership speaker; Office of Management and Budget Deputy Director Sean O'Keefe (tapped to be NASA administrator); and Indiana State Auditor Connie Kay Nass.

Highlight sessions will focus on Yellow Book Independence; Federal, State and Local Performance Measures; GASB/FASAB Updates; the AICPA's new State and Local Audit Guide; OMB Scorecard for Federal Agencies; Grant Streamlining Initiatives; AGA/CFO Council e-Government Survey; GASB 34: Lessons Learned from Early Implementation; CEAR Program Best Practices; and much, much more.

Watch the official conference website at www.agacgfm.org/pdc for agenda updates and registration information. See page 15 for a PDC registration form. ■

President, continued from previous page

many state and local governments, attendance has been excellent. I particularly enjoy the chapter luncheons where I can visit with individual members on a one-on-one basis and learn about what is really going on in our chapters. I am always pleased with what I see and hear.

The chapter level is where the real success is for AGA, where we build on our foundation of providing service to members and attracting new members to our Association. I don't think I can overstate the importance of the efforts of our chapter and regional leaders.

While it is still early in our first year of implementing our regional governance structure, I am convinced that this change will be an effective tool in promoting AGA's long-range strategic plan, improving communication and promoting the exchange of ideas. The 96 regional coordinators for the six regional functions—education, certification, membership, chapter development and assistance, early careers and community service—will make a difference with their expertise. The specialists in each of these functions are staying connected through regular

conference calls. The goal of these specialists is to improve the delivery of services and promote the coordination of AGA's mission and goals with those of the chapters and the regions.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our March Leadership Workshop or at a chapter or regional event later in the year.

I continue to enjoy the journey as your president! ■



HAPPENINGS

Michael Bishop, CGFM, a member of AGA's New York Capital Chapter, was recently promoted to chief of the Audit Office at the Schenectady Naval Reactors Office, U.S. Department of Energy.

James K. Blakeslee, CGFM, an active member for AGA's Northern Virginia Chapter since 1972, retired from federal service on Jan. 3. Jim's career with the federal government spanned more than 33 years. While serving in the U.S. Army, Jim was a recipient of the Purple Heart during his tour of duty in Vietnam. He has been an excellent auditor and manager with the Army Audit Service, the Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General (OIG), and the Department of Veterans Affairs' OIG, Office of Audit.

Bill Burch, CGFM, a member of AGA's Baton Rouge Chapter, has accepted a new AGA position of regional coordinator for education of the South Central Region.

Virginia Burton, CGFM, a member of AGA's Baton Rouge Chapter, has been elected to the Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System Board.

Ron Huritz, president of AGA's Chicago Chapter, was recently awarded the Certified Business Manager designation by the Association of Professionals in Business Management. The APBM provides distance learning in higher business education using the virtual college concept. The CBM credential is a business generalist program, which measures the ability, skills and knowledge—from basic to advanced—required of a business professional.

John Jonson, CGFM, CPA, and a 25-year member of various AGA chapters, including Washington, D.C., retired in fiscal year 2002 from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) after more than 33 years of federal service. Jonson was director, Office of Audit, Financial Audit Division. He received the OIG's Career Achievement Award, was named Division Director of the Year, and received numerous other distinguished achievement awards. Jonson

was a pioneer and leader in financial statement audits in the government. With his leadership, VA OIG completed one of the first financial statement audits of a major federal department, as a pilot project for other agencies to follow.

James Konicki, a member of AGA's New York Capital Chapter, has been named co-chair and treasurer of Polonia Global Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization, whose mission is to support and encourage pluralism by exposing children and their families to the reality of global exchange, interaction and independence.

Leroy Marquez, a member of AGA's New Mexico Chapter and the deputy director of the state Department of Finance and Administration, retired at the end of 2001.

Ralph Miller, a member of AGA's New Mexico Chapter, is the new business manager of the Health Services and Substance Abuse Bureaus of the Adult Prison Division of the New Mexico Corrections Department. He is responsible for all fiscal elements of these budgeted activities, as well as overseeing the department's institutional budgets and federal capital projects grants management.

Raphael Torres, a member of AGA's New Mexico Chapter, is the new fiscal officer for the State Parks Division in the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. He is responsible for the coordination of all fiscal activities of the 31 state parks and regional offices.

Gladys Tressler, a member of AGA's New Mexico Chapter, is the new fiscal officer for the Financial Management Bureau of the New Mexico Corrections Department. She is responsible for overseeing the Inmate Trust Accounting System.

Sharon Wurst, CGFM, community service director of AGA's Sacramento Chapter, has taken a new position with the State Controller's Office, Division of Accounting and Reporting. ■

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CGFM Training Series Schedule Set for Washington, Phoenix

The following is a schedule for the CGFM Training Series, jointly offered by AGA and Management Concepts. The courses are: Course 1, *The Governmental Environment* (8 CPE hours); Course 2, *Governmental Accounting, Financial Reporting and Budgeting* (24 CPE hours); Course 3, *Governmental Financial Management and Control* (16 CPE hours). The CGFM Training Series provides a solid foundation in auditing, accounting, financial management and budgeting—while instilling the confidence candidates need to sit for the CGFM Examinations. All financial managers can benefit from this valuable training.

Washington, D.C.

Course 1: February 19, 2002

Course 2: February 27 - March 1, 2002

Course 3: February 20-21, 2002

Phoenix

Course 1: March 18, 2002

Course 2: March 26-28, 2002

Course 3: March 19-20, 2002

Washington, D.C.

Course 1: April 8

Course 2: April 17-19

Course 3: April 9-10

To register for any of these courses, contact Management Concepts at 703.790.9595 or visit their website at www.managementconcepts.com. ■

February

19-20 • AGA's Washington, D.C. Chapter is sponsoring "Technology Enabling Financial Management," at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C., which will present a combination of traditional speaker forums and interactive demonstrations by federal agencies and vendors to provide a primer for financial professionals on the products that support financial systems. The keynote speaker is **Mark Forman**, assistant director of Information Technology and e-Government, at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Topics include JFMIP—the latest and greatest; CMM I—an update to the Capability Maturity Model that address integrated system implementation for packaged applications; and successful financial system implementations—a roundtable discussion with executives who have brought new financial systems to full operation recently. To register for this event, worth 15 CPE hours, see the chapter's website at www.agadc.org or call **Cis Kuennen**, CGFM, education director, 703.364.6051.

March

4-6 • AGA's New York Capital Chapter is co-sponsoring its seventh annual "The Conference That Counts." This three-day, three-track conference is sponsored by the local chapters of AGA, IIA and ISACA. This extremely popular conference will offer IT security and audit, general/financial management emerging issues important to auditors and other financial professionals. Watch for announcements regarding speakers and costs in each association's newsletter and websites (www.agacgfm.org, www.theiia.org, www.isaca.org). Earn a total of 21 CPE hours. Contact **Sally Wojeski**, CGFM, at 518.447.9337 or via e-mail at swojeski@osc.state.ny.us.

12 • AGA's Boston Chapter will host its Annual Regional PDC at Bentley College. Ten training tracks are offered (five in the morning and five in the afternoon) and the luncheon

speaker is AGA National President **Richard V. Norment**, CGFM, CIA. The cost is \$105 with 8 CPE hours offered. Those interested can register on our web page at www.aga-boston-chapter.org or can contact vice president for education, **David LeBlanc**, CGFM, at 781.338.6485.

14-15 • AGA's Mid-Western Region Professional Development Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn/SunSpree Resort at the Lake of the Ozarks, MO. Contact **Cathy Long**, CGFM, at longc@molottery.com.

April

11-12 • AGA's Dallas Chapter is hosting a Texas-Oklahoma Regional Professional Development Conference at the Marriott Las Colinas in Irving, TX. The two-day conference will offer 15 hours of CPE on auditing and general/financial management emerging issues important to auditors and other financial professionals. Topics include "Increasing Audit Effectiveness through Behavior and Communication Skills," "Ethical Considerations for a Successful Personal Life and Professional Career" and "Tracking Down Fraud Perpetrators." Watch for announcements about speakers and costs in the Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston and Oklahoma City Chapter newsletters or check out the Dallas Chapter website at www.agadallas.org. Contact **Jason Arrington** at 214.767.2549 (jarringt@os.dhhs.gov) or **John Perkins** at 214.767.2546 (jperkins@os.dhhs.gov).

25 • AGA's Southern Wisconsin Chapter will host its annual Spring Symposium on "Preservation of Assets, Both Human and Physical," at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. AGA's Immediate Past National President **WA "Bill" Broadus Jr.**, CGFM, CPA, will be the keynote speaker. The event is worth 8 CPE hours and the fee is \$50 for members and \$65 for nonmembers. Contact **Connie Wali**, CGFM at 608.261.7785 or via e-mail at walicm@dhfs.state.wi.us. ■

LEAD TO SUCCEED

The Association of Government Accountants was founded in 1950 and has grown into an international organization embodying the professional efforts of more than 18,000 distinguished members representing all forms and levels of government. AGA is a professional organization dedicated to the enhancement of public financial management and the safeguarding of the public trust by ensuring compliance and accountability for public funds and efficient and effective delivery of services. ■



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Employer:	<input type="radio"/> Federal	<input type="radio"/> State	<input type="radio"/> County <input type="radio"/> City <input type="radio"/> Private <input type="radio"/> Academia
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	<input type="radio"/> CGFM Program	<input type="radio"/> Internet Search	<input type="radio"/> Chapter Meeting <input type="radio"/> AGA Publication <input type="radio"/> Direct Mail
Age:	<input type="radio"/> Below 20	<input type="radio"/> 21-30	<input type="radio"/> 31-40 <input type="radio"/> 41-50 <input type="radio"/> 51-60 <input type="radio"/> 61 and above
Education: Highest degree attained	Year	Accreditation & Certificates:	
Please list any other financial management or accounting associations you are a member of:			
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AGA recognizes and thanks the following top sponsors for their efforts during the period, May 1, 2001 to Nov. 30, 2001. Top sponsors are featured monthly in *TOPICS*.

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AGA to Co-Sponsor Summit

AGA has been invited to cosponsor the 2002 Government Performance Summit—Innovations in Improving Federal Management Under the President's Management Agenda. The summit will present best practices from leading agencies and will cover the implementation of the President's five Management Goals: Aligning Performance to Budgets, Human Capital Management, Citizen Centered e-Government, Financial Management Improvement and Competitive Sourcing.

Presented by The Performance Institute, Reason Public Policy Institute, Council for Excellence in Government (CEG), National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), George Washington University, National Council for Public-Private Partnerships (NCPPT), Coalition for Effective Change and AGA, the summit will take place on March 25-27, 2002 at the Kellogg Conference Center, Gallaudett University in Washington, D.C. Confirmed speakers include Office of Management and Budget Director Mitch Daniels, Office of Personnel Management Director Kay Coles James and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson.

AGA members will receive a 15 percent discount on registration fees. To find out more about the Summit as well as registration information, go to www.PerformanceWeb.org or visit the AGA website at www.agacgfm.org. ■

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AGA Board Comments on FASAB Proposal—AGA's Financial Management Standards Board (FMSB) has weighed in on a Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB) Exposure Draft. The proposal, *Accounting for National Defense PP&E and Associated Cleanup Costs*, would amend Statements of Federal Financial Accounting Standards (SFFAS) Nos. 6, 8 and 11, which the board supports subject to several suggestions.

"Our greatest concern is the failure to recognize the significant off-balance-sheet liability that will result for cleanup costs related to mission support items," wrote FMSB Chairman James M. Williams, CGFM, in a Nov. 26 letter to FASAB. A full text of all the FMSB comments can be read at www.agacgfm.org/academy/fmsb.htm.

Big Five Vow to Improve Standards—Facing up to a raft of negative publicity for the accounting profession in light of Big Five firm Andersen's association with failed energy giant Enron, members of all of the Big Five firms joined proverbial hands recently and vowed to uphold higher standards in the future. Read more at www.accountingweb.com/item/65518.

Newspaper Takes Aim at Accountants—*The Washington Post* has begun a series of articles that place the accounting profession under a microscope. The first article, appearing Dec. 4, focused on the billions of dollars lost by investors as a result of accounting errors, the role of accountants as public watchdogs, the independence policies heralded by the Big Five firms and the SEC's attempt to pull in the reins

on auditor independence, the standards and practices that are expected of public accountants, and the types of conflicts that can arise. Read the story at www.washingtonpost.com. Learn more at www.accountingweb.com.

Clarification—The Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB) is an independent organization, which is separate and distinct from the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO). An article on page 14 of December *TOPICS* implied a relationship between the two. We regret any confusion this might have caused.

AGA Scholarships—Each year, AGA awards six \$1,000 merit scholarships to AGA members and their family members; two \$500 part-time merit scholarship to AGA members and their family members and one \$1,000 community service scholarship open to AGA members and nonmembers. **The deadline for receipt of AGA National Scholarship applications is April 5, 2002.** Apply now and take advantage of your AGA membership. Visit www.agacgfm.org/about/a_ascholar.htm for more details.

President Bush Announces OMB Nominee—*The National Journal's* Technology Daily reported on Dec. 19 that President Bush nominated Nancy Dorn to be deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget. Dorn is currently the legislative affairs assistant to Vice President Dick Cheney and would replace Sean O'Keefe who has been nominated to head NASA. Read more at www.govexec.com/dailyfed/1201/121901td3.htm. ■

CGFM, continued from cover

decided to go ahead and take the second exam ("hands down the hardest one") in October, and passed it. The Government Employees Training Act (GETA) paid for the courses, and she studied using the course book and practice exams on her own time.

"The courses are really excellent," Graham said. "It was convenient to take the Internet course, but you can't beat the other courses for the practical, real-life experiences of the instructors and students." Course 2 explored different financial management scenarios and budgeting problems and solutions. "It was one of the best courses I've taken for continuing education."

"I actually learned some things that I'm using in my job," she said. "That happens so rarely in a continuing education course."

In fact, Graham planned to finish Course 2, this time in San Diego in January, even though she has already passed the exam that goes along with it. "I'm looking forward to taking it without the pressure."

Graham still hasn't heard whether she got the job she was interested in, but even if she doesn't move up right now, she still feels the CGFM will serve her well. "For one thing, it will make me more competitive in the future for other job postings in the finance area."

Pay increase requests must also be backed up by a written explanation of why the raise is warranted. Education is one of the factors that is considered, so earning the CGFM certification will help.

It's already helped her do her job better. While Graham has to manage the money spent, her position has no procurement authority. Graham said she didn't know much about that area until she earned the CGFM. She also learned much more about the laws affecting financial reporting, the CFO Act in particular. The experience has also given her more confidence since it had been four years since she had taken any kind of a test, when she took the exam for the CMA certification. "It really was a boost," she said. "It's a great sense of accomplishment."

For others who want to earn the CGFM certification, Graham advises taking the preparatory courses close together in time and taking the exams soon after the courses. She said candidates should take the first course first. It's the shortest time commitment (one day) and the first exam will help candidates get accustomed to the format.

"It may seem scary, but what I found was it wasn't a lot of memorization. There's a little bit of that, but if you know how to practically apply the material, then you're going to pass the exam." She estimated the exams were 85 percent practical application of knowledge.

The CGFM process was less rigorous than earning the CPA or CMA certification, but very valuable, she said.

"I think it shows that you're dynamic in your career," she said. "You can go out and be challenged, and can demonstrate that knowledge." ■

Renewals, Chance to Win Free PDC Registration for CGFM Effort

Renew Your CGFM Today!

The annual renewal invoices for membership and CGFM have gone out. Please submit your payment by March 31. You can also renew your CGFM on our website at www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/renewal.htm.

The requirements for retaining your CGFM certification are as follows:

- Pay the CGFM renewal fee at the beginning of every year.
- Adhere to the AGA *Code of Ethics*.
- Complete at least 80 hours of continuing professional education (CPE) every two years in government financial management topics or related technical subjects (with at least 20 hours in the first year).
- Maintain, and if requested by AGA, provide detailed information on CPE hours completed. (Please do not send your CPE documentation at this time).

Individuals not in compliance with the above requirements may not present themselves as a CGFM (either in writing or orally) or display the CGFM certificate.

If you are unable to renew your certification because you have not fulfilled the CPE requirement or if you have questions about your CPE cycle, please contact the Office of Professional Certification at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 313, or 311.

Five Months Remaining to Win a Free 2002 PDC Registration

At the July PDC, AGA's Immediate Past National President WA "Bill" Broadus Jr., CGFM, CPA, made a very generous offer—a free registration to the 2002 PDC to each of the four chapters that boast the largest number of new CGFMs in their chapter from July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002.

In today's job market when credentials put you a step ahead of the competition, the CGFM certification

informs your employer, your potential employer and your colleagues that you are serious about your profession and that you have the knowledge, skills and experience to do the job.

- As an employer, you know that hiring the "best and brightest" is the goal of every organization. What better way to achieve that hiring goal than to hire financial managers with the CGFM designation?
- As an early- or mid-career professional, you can increase your career opportunities by having the CGFM designation after your name.
- As an individual, there is no better time to begin earning your CGFM certification than now!
- As a chapter certification coordinator, there is no better time to introduce AGA and the CGFM.

Introduce the benefits of certification to individuals in the financial management field—and you will help your

CGFM News, continued on page 14

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Federal Leadership Award Recipients Honored at January FLC

The following awards were presented Jan. 25 at AGA's 13th Annual Federal Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C.

Andy Barr Award—*To formally recognize financial executives in the private sector who exemplify and promote excellence in government, outstanding leadership, high ethical standards, and innovative management techniques.*

Robert A. Freeman, Washington, D.C. Chapter, Vice President, American Management Systems, Fairfax, VA.

In recognition of Mr. Freeman's exemplification and promotion of excellence in government management. He has demonstrated outstanding leadership, high ethical standards and has implemented innovative management techniques to improve financial management.

Distinguished Federal Leadership Award—*To formally recognize elected or Presidentially-appointed federal officials who exemplify and promote excellence in government management and have demonstrated outstanding leadership in enhancing sound financial management legislation, regulations, practices, policies and systems.*

David M. Walker, CPA, Washington, D.C. Chapter, Comptroller General of the United States, U.S. General Accounting Office, Washington, D.C.

In recognition of Mr. Walker's extraordinary leadership, vision and dedication as Comptroller General in supporting the transition to a more results-oriented and accountable federal government while promoting governmental financial management excellence.

Stephen Horn, U.S. Representative, 38th District of California, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

In recognition of Rep. Horn's work to champion federal financial management reform and his focused attention on the need for ensuring that American taxpayers have a responsible, efficient and financially accountable federal government.

Elmer Staats Award—*To formally recognize federal professionals who exemplify and promote excellence in government, outstanding leadership, high ethical standards and innovative management procedures.*

Richard A. Leach, CIA, CFE, Washington, D.C. Chapter, Auditor General, U.S. Department of the Navy, Washington, D.C.

In recognition of Mr. Leach's exceptional leadership and efforts to reinvent the Naval Audit Service into a more efficient and effective internal audit organization. Mr. Leach has made significant improvements in reshaping the organization, reducing costs and

improving processes. Mr. Leach has demonstrated an exceptionally high degree of professional competence in the execution of his duties as Auditor General.

Philip T. Calder, CGFM, Washington, D.C. Chapter, Chief Accountant, U.S. General Accounting Office.

In recognition of Mr. Calder's sustained outstanding leadership and dedication in leading the federal government toward setting high quality accounting standards, his extraordinary personal integrity and professionalism, and exceptional commitment to public service.

National Awards Committee

Many thanks to AGA's National Awards Committee for their work in choosing these award recipients:

Barbara J. Gordon, CGFM, Chair; **Angela D. Billings, CGFM**; **Virginia S. Brizendine, CGFM**; **William M. Burch, CGFM**; **Mark Funkhouser**; **Kevin E. Gullett, CGFM**; **Douglas Kemp Haywood, CGFM**; **Edward A. Karass, CGFM**; **Sherry L. Klein, CGFM**; **Carla Kohler, CGFM**; **Cynthia S. Moreland**; **Thomas D. Roslewicz, CGFM**; **Gerald A. Silva, CGFM, CPA**; **Jeffrey C. Steinhoff, CGFM**; **Cornelius E. Tierney, CGFM**; and **Joel L. Wells, CGFM, CPA, CIA**. ■

CEAR NOTES

Advance the Profession—Are you interested in serving as a reviewer with AGA's Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) Program? We are continually seeking senior-level (GS-14 and above) individuals representing CFO offices, IG offices and private firms who can volunteer their time and expertise to serve in this critical capacity. Reviewers read one Accountability Report, evaluate it using AGA's checklist, submit detailed recommendations for improving the report, and discuss all recommendations during a team meeting. Visit www.agacgfm.org/cear/cearreviewer.htm for all the details

including benefits of participation, eligibility, level of commitment and an application form.

Participate in the CEAR Program—Are you ready to demonstrate your agency's commitment to accountability reporting excellence? Your work producing quality, timely Accountability Reports is essential to the overall objective of advancing government accountability, improving financial management and enhancing the government's credibility among the taxpaying public. Through the CEAR Program, AGA advises agencies on how to prepare high-quality Accountability Reports. The program then

recognizes agencies that produce exceptional Accountability Reports by presenting them with the Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting.

To ensure your Accountability Report is included in the next CEAR Program cycle, submit your Accountability Report, supporting documentation and \$5,000 filing fee by **March 28, 2002**.

Visit www.agacgfm.org/cear/index.htm for more details or contact Lisa Thatcher at lthatcher@agacgfm.org or 800.AGA.7211, ext. 212. ■

CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

CEAR, continued from cover

strategies and best practices for accountability reporting success.

Malone-Gilmer said it made agency officials feel good that the Financial Integrity Act section of the report was one of the better ones submitted. "That's confirmation that we're doing it right," she said. "It's our goal to get the Certificate, so as soon as we get a clean opinion on the financial statements, we'll get it."

Program Designed to Improve Accountability

AGA's Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) Program was established in 1997 in conjunction with the Chief Financial Officers Council and the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to improve accountability by making the reports more streamlined and effective. Accountability Reports are designed to show the connection between an agency's budget and its strategic plan, but excellent Accountability Reports go even further, providing enough information to evaluate programs and assess financial stewardship.

This year, 13 federal agencies paid \$5,000 each to participate in the program. A five-member review team, using a 40-page checklist, evaluated each report. The reviewers then recommended improvements, covering everything from the basic technical, statutory and regulatory requirements, to finer points, such as whether the use of a certain photo or graphic did the best job of complementing the data.

Five agencies—the U.S. Departments of Labor, Commerce and the Interior, as well as the National Science Foundation and the Social Security Administration—received the Certificate of Excellence for their fiscal year 2000 Accountability Reports.

An In-Depth Review

Gregory Walter, the Small Business Administration's (SBA) deputy chief financial officer, knows firsthand just how much work goes into reviewing an agency's Accountability Report. He served as a reviewer himself one year, spending 30 to 40 hours studying the report and another 20 hours writing his

findings and combining them with the other members of the review team.

The SBA has also not earned a Certificate of Excellence in the two years it has participated, and while Walter believes the agency is not far from that goal, he thinks the main point of participating is the rigorous review, not the Certificate.

Most government reports have a very limited audience, he said, and it's difficult at times to determine whether the report is meaningful. The CEAR Program gives the Accountability Report a methodical review that it would not ordinarily get. AGA is well respected in federal government circles, he said, and AGA's stamp of approval means something to the public, OMB and Congress.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has received that stamp of approval, in the form of a Certificate of Excellence, every year it has participated in the program with the exception of the pilot year.

Tom Staples, SSA's deputy CFO and president of AGA's Baltimore Chapter, said the agency still has more to learn. While SSA has continued to improve its report year after year, "We don't know it all by a long stretch," he said. The review process, which Staples called "a little bit intimidating," results in several pages of critical comments every year. An agency has to do far more than produce accurate numbers. It also has to provide analysis, program information, mission statements and performance data.

Staples called the \$5,000 filing fee an investment in his agency's credibility. "We're a very large public program," he said. "We want our clients out there—whether they're taxpayers or beneficiaries—to know that this program's financial data and financial reports are good, that we hold the stewardship responsibility high on our priority list. So, this is a fee, yes, but it's one way to tell the public that this is a report that's reliable."

Continuous Improvement a Must

R. Schuyler Leshner, CGFM, deputy CFO of the U.S. Department of the Interior and vice chair of the CEAR

Board, said the CEAR Program provides the best critique his agency can find. He said he generally finds the comments to be very helpful, which is not to say he doesn't disagree with some of them. He believes the reviewers themselves are getting better and are raising the bar on their expectations. "We know where the bar is going and that helps," he said.

Interior participated for four years without receiving the Certificate, but continued to incorporate the review panel's recommendations and received the Certificate for its 2000 report.

No agency—not even the bar-setting Social Security Administration—can sit back and assume they will receive the Certificate year after year because the process is getting more complex.

OMB is guiding agencies to produce a combined Performance and Accountability Report, as provided for in the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000. It is designed to present a more integrated story about each agency. While that means fewer reports, it's also a logistical and practical challenge to combine all the information into one document. The combined report is required by the Government Performance and Results Act. The Small Business Administration and the U.S. Departments of Labor and Energy were some of the few agencies to produce the combined report for 2000—ahead of schedule.

Leshner encourages other agencies to participate in the CEAR Program because it's easy to look at the report through your own set of blinders. "This is tapping into four additional minds to help you improve your reports," he said. Receiving the Certificate of Excellence is really beside the point, he said. "It certainly is nice to have, but the real value is those comments."

To ensure your Accountability Report is included in the next CEAR Program cycle, submit your Accountability Report, supporting documentation and \$5,000 filing fee by March 28, 2002. Visit www.agacgfm.org/cear/index.htm for more details or contact Lisa Thatcher, director of the CEAR Program, at lthatcher@agacgfm.org or 800.AGA.7211, ext. 212. ■

by Christina M. Camara

GOVERNMENT INNOVATION

Five Problem-Solving Programs Receive Coveted National Award

The Institute for Government Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government announced Dec. 13 that five initiatives have won 2001 Innovations in American Government Awards for their outstanding creative problem solving. All the winning programs also received \$100,000 to help communicate their efforts to citizens and other governments nationwide.

"This year's winners demonstrate the power of innovation that drives our nation forward. They offer solutions to long-standing challenges in education, health care, economic development and public safety," said Gail Christopher, executive director of the Institute for Government Innovation. Chosen from 15 finalists were the following five initiatives:

- **The National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS)**, established by the U.S.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), created guidelines that empower staff at 163 VA medical centers to report adverse events and close calls involving patients, which are traditionally underreported for fear of punishment. With this change in medical culture, VA health care professionals have made systemic improvements that have prevented mistakes from recurring, thereby saving lives.

- **The OK-First Program** uses computer technology to provide local public safety workers in Oklahoma with up-to-the-minute information about severe weather. This enables police, firefighters and emergency management personnel to make life-saving decisions quickly and effectively, and to broadcast timely emergency warnings to citizens about tornados, high winds, wild fires and other weather-related hazards.

- **Ho-Chunk, Inc.**, chartered by the Winnebago Tribe, has diversified the economic platform for Native Americans in Nebraska. By reinvesting profits from its gaming enterprises, Ho-Chunk developed many new businesses, including hotels, shopping centers, gas stations, manufacturers and a Native news website. This initiative has increased employment, decreased poverty, and sent the Tribe's annual revenues from \$150,000 in 1990 to more than \$50 million today.
- **Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA)** helps educationally disadvantaged students in California to excel in math and science. Teachers, parents, industry leaders and higher education staff team up to provide the academic support and positive reinforcement

Innovation, continued on page 14



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2002 AGA CALENDAR

March 7-8 • National Executive Committee (NEC) Meeting, AGA National Office, Alexandria, VA.

March 8 • Deadline to submit nominations for 2001-2002 National Awards.

March 9-10 • Leadership Training Workshop, Alexandria, VA.

March 28 • Deadline to submit fiscal year 2001 Accountability Reports to AGA's CEAR Program.

April 5 • Deadline to submit Scholarship nominations.

May 8 • Third Annual GASB 34 Teleconference.

July 6 • NEC Meeting, Atlanta, GA.

July 7 • National Board of Directors and Chapter Leadership Meetings, Atlanta, GA.

July 7-10 • AGA's 51st Annual Professional Development Conference & Exposition, Atlanta, GA.

Sept. 23-24 • AGA/NASACT 11th Annual State & Local Government Leadership Conference, Richmond, VA. Sept. 25 additional workshop offered by the Richmond Chapter.

AGA's National Awards—A Proud Tradition Continues

AGA's National Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for 10 National Awards that recognize the leaders advancing our profession and setting the standards of excellence:

- Einhorn-Gary Award
- Robert W. King Award
- Frank Greathouse Award
- Achievement of the Year Award
- Education and Training Award
- Research Achievement Award
- Cornelius E. Tierney/Ernst & Young Research Award
- Special Achievement Award
- Chapter Service Award
- Community Service Award

These awards will be presented during AGA's Professional Development Conference & Exposition in Atlanta, GA, on July 7-10, 2002. In many cases, individuals do not have to be members of AGA to be eligible. **All nominations are due Friday, March 8, 2002.** Visit www.agacgfm.org/about/a_awards.htm for more information or contact Sebrina Bridgers at sbridgers@agacgfm.org or 800.AGA.7211, ext. 100, for a Microsoft Word version of the nomination forms. ■

AGA Adds Three New Options for e-Learning

CPA Report Government. A one-year subscription to courses developed specifically for professionals in public practice and government. Each quarter, four new CPE programs are released to the website, in addition to the over 30 archived programs. Recent programs include: *New GASB Pronouncement*, with Jim Williams, CGFM, of the Governmental Accounting Standards Advisory Council, and *G2B: Winning the Influence Game*, with Michael Watkins, professor at Harvard Business School. The special member price is \$95 for a one-year subscription.

FMN (Financial Management Network). This is an "update" subscription program featuring notable experts addressing the issues and developments in the field of finance and accounting primarily geared to business and industry. Topic areas include *Financial Reporting, Auditing, Consulting Services and Taxation*. Recent topics include: *Business Combinations and Intangible Assets* with FASB Chairman Edmund Jenkins, *Digitization* with James Parke, Vice Chairman and CFO of GE Capital Services, *Tax Reform 2001* with Kenneth Kies of PricewaterhouseCoopers, and *Fraud Prevention and Detection* with nationally recognized watchdog Gary Zeune. Regular price for this yearly subscription is \$249, member price \$199.

SmartPros Advantage. "Skills-based" courses in a wide variety of subjects, an Advantage subscription offers access to more than 1,000 hours of courses, on topics such as; *Activity-Based Costing, Fraud Examination in Government Entities, Audit Sampling, The Balanced Scorecard, Interpreting Balance Sheets, Nonexpendable and Expendable Trust Funds in Government Accounting, Federal Government Accounting, Auditing Cash and Equivalents* and much, much more. Members can take as many courses as they want during the subscription year and track their CPE credits for easy access and reporting. The Advantage subscription regular price is \$249, but is available to AGA members for \$199.

Three new subscription products are available, offering a total of over 1200 hours of courses. All courses are CPE certified and compliant with CGFMs requirements.

The AGA's partner in education is SmartPros Ltd, a company that has provided group study and online courses for finance and accounting since 1981. Take a demo or sign up today at www.agacgfm.com/academy.

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REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11

Contributions to AGA Relief Effort Top \$9,800; Still Time to Donate

AGA has raised \$9,817.17 as of December 12, 2001 for the AGA Relief Effort. All proceeds will be divided evenly among the families of those AGA members who were killed in the attack on the Pentagon. The fund raising for this effort will span the rest of our program year. Thank you again—to those listed below as well as numerous donors who wished to remain anonymous—for supporting the AGA Relief Effort. ■

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Innovation, continued from page 12

that students need to pursue these subjects in post-secondary institutions, including community colleges and universities. Eighty-five percent of high school graduates who participate in MESA attend college—much higher than the state average of 50 percent.

- **The Toledo Plan** is a unique teacher peer review method that mentors and evaluates teachers in Toledo public schools. Before this initiative began, the assessment process often sparked conflict between teacher unions and administrators. The new teacher-to-teacher approach is less confrontational and fosters better teaching.

“These initiatives demonstrate that, with innovation and diligence, governments can meet even the greatest challenges,” said Stephen Goldsmith, faculty director of the Innovations in American Government Program at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. “And it’s vital that we capitalize on this type of public-sector creativity in order to strengthen our nation, especially during these difficult times.”

About the Innovations Awards

Celebrating its 15th anniversary, the Innovations in American Government Awards recognize high-quality, problem-solving government programs at the federal, state, local and tribal levels. The goal of the Awards program is to foster replication of the best ideas to meet the challenges facing governments.

The awards—a program of the Institute for Government Innovation at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government—are administered in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government. The Program was founded by the Ford Foundation to identify and promote excellence and creativity in the public sector.

For more information on the Innovations in American Government program and this year’s recipients, please visit www.innovations.harvard.edu. ■

CGFM News, continued from page 9

AGA chapter earn a free registration to the 2002 PDC! For more information, please contact Joan Schwartz, deputy executive director of Professional Certification at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 311, or via e-mail at jschwartz@agacgfm.org. Good luck!

Have you completed all 80 CPE hours in the last two years?

If you are a CGFM holder who earned the certification in 1994, 1995, 1997 or 1999, your two-year CPE cycle ended

on Dec. 31, 2001. If you have not completed at least 80 hours of Continuing Professional Education in 2000 and 2001, you can catch up during the grace period of Jan. 1 to March 31, 2002. Any CPE hours completed toward a deficiency in the last cycle may not be counted toward the requirements for the next two-year period. The hours have to be in government financial management topics or related technical subjects. Please keep a complete record of all CPE hours taken—you may be request-

ed to provide detailed backup documentation in case you are selected in our annual audit.

If you earned your CGFM in 1996, 1998 or 2000, you still have one more year in your two-year CPE cycle to earn the 80 hours. However, you should have already completed at least 20 CPE hours in 2001.

If you have questions about your CPE requirement, please contact the Office of Professional Certification at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 313 or 311. ■

PDC 2002—TRANSFORMING THE GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISE

Professional Development Conference Registration Form

July 7-10, 2002 • Hyatt Regency Atlanta • Atlanta, GA • *Transforming the Government Enterprise* • 30 CPE Hours

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Registration Fees (Register Online at www.agacgfm.org/pdc and save \$25!)

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Total Amount Due \$ _____ AGA Federal Tax ID #53-0217158 _____

Method of Payment

Registration forms must be accompanied by a check, credit card number or validated government purchase order. If paying for more than one attendee using the same check or purchase order number, make a photocopy of this form, completed for each attendee and enclose with accompanying payment.

Check payable to AGA enclosed _____ Check # _____

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(If paying with a purchase order, we must receive the hard copy with your registration form. We cannot process your registration without both of these forms. Purchase orders must be paid within 30 days of the conference.)

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Cancellations/Refunds/Substitutions

AGA will assess a \$50 processing fee on all refunds. If a registrant is unable to attend the conference, AGA must receive a written request by June 7, 2002 to receive a refund, less processing fee. Confirmed registrants who fail to attend and do not cancel two weeks prior to the conference will be charged the entire registration fee. To receive a refund, you must have written verification from the Conference Registrar that your cancellation was received. Telephone cancellations will not be accepted. Substitutions will be accepted if authorized in writing by the registrant.

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About **TOPICS**

AGA's monthly newsletter, *Government Financial Management TOPICS*, covers member and Association activities on the national as well as chapter levels. **TOPICS** features employment opportunities, community service news, chapter news, conference information, developments within the profession and a calendar of chapter training programs.

TOPICS is published 10 times a year by the AGA Communications Department.

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Please send contributions for **TOPICS** to mforce@agacgfm.org and address changes to agamembers@agacgfm.org.

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October 15 – December

November 15 – January

December 15 – February

January 15 – March

Ads are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to available space in each issue.

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TOPICS

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