

**Association of
Government Accountants**
Denver Chapter

www.denveraga.org



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Professional Development Conference 2005

I can't believe it is March already. This year is just flying by and we have already had some wonderful programs. Many of you attended the March 2, 2005 audio conference on the "Key Reasons Why the Breakdown of Internal Controls Contribute to Fraud." I was very impressed by the speakers, John J. Hall with Hall Consulting, Inc., and David Hancox, the State Audit Director in the Office of the State Comptroller for the State of New York. The discussion didn't focus on typical internal controls, but on communication and management. Some of their points included that auditors needed to get in the field and understand the operations. Too often auditors focus on the paper and the hard controls; policies and procedures, systems etc. The new focus is really on the soft controls; competence of employees; integrity of employees and management etc. If you missed this audio conference you can go to the chapter website and see the PowerPoint presentation.

AGA's mission is to serve professionals in the government financial management community, by providing quality education, fostering professional development and certification, and supporting standards and research to advance government accountability.

FROM THE PRESIDENT - CONTINUED:

We also had a wonderful February lunch meeting. T.A. Taylor-Hunt discussed ways to look at your legal health to protect yourself. I know personally I need to make some adjustments to the way I think. We have a wonderful program for our March meeting, Mr. Andrew Romanoff, the State Speaker of the House will be our speaker on March 23, 2005. A flier will be sent out very shortly.

At the National level the AGA is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Certified Government Financial Manager program. Past President Jeffrey C. Steinhoff launched this initiative during his 1993-1994 term with the hopes that 4,000 would apply for CGFM status during the initial certification period. There were many that doubted this expectation, but when more than 13,000 applications came in Mr. Steinhoff made believers out of people. Since that time the program has been extremely successful and the accreditation has earned government financial managers the respect they deserve. President Bush sent a letter commending the AGA on its program and how it has advanced accountability and encouraged professional development. I would like to thank Mr. Steinhoff and those board members who had the foresight to develop that program and encourage all members to market this program to your co-workers and colleagues.

The Professional Development Conference brochure and registration form is on the chapter website, www.denveraga.org. Don't forget to register and pass on the word. We've got a great program. I hope to see you there.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2005:

You are invited to the Denver Chapter of the Association of Government Accountant's 19th annual Professional Development Conference on April 26th and 27th. The theme of the conference this year is "Government Accountability Excellence Drives Performance" and will be held at the Radisson Hotel Aurora Southeast (I-225 and Parker Rd). 16 CPE's are available with this training. We are excited to offer you this program. To see the agenda and get the registration form, log in to the Denver chapter's website at www.denveraga.org. Registration cost for this year's PDC will again be \$250 for early registration by 8 April.

Denver Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants Presents:

Speaker: ANDREW ROMANOFF
Speaker of the House
Colorado State Representative, District 6

**Topic: TABOR; the Budget & Happenings of the
Legislative Session**

State Representative Andrew Romanoff (D-Denver) Andrew Romanoff is the Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, the first Democrat to hold that post since 1975.

Rep. Romanoff was elected to the House in 2000 and reelected in 2002 and 2004. He represents House District 6, covering east Denver and Glendale. Before his election to the speakership in 2005, he served as the House Minority Leader.

The Denver Post described Rep. Romanoff as one of Colorado's most effective legislators. He steered 25 bills through the Republican-controlled House in his first two terms, including laws that expand the supply of affordable housing, provide treatment for substance abuse and mental illness, and protect the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

In the legislature's "off-season," Rep. Romanoff teaches political science at the Community College of Aurora. He has also taught at Red Rocks Community College and at the University of Colorado's Graduate School of Public Affairs. He began teaching in Central America and speaks fluent Spanish.

Rep. Romanoff earned a bachelor's degree at Yale and a master's degree in public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He has a twin sister, a Democratic mother, a Republican father, and a border collie named Zorro.

Where: Radisson Hotel, Denver
Stapleton Plaza
3333 Quebec Street
303-321-3500

When: March 23, 2005
Check-in: 11:00 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.
Lunch served: 11:30 a.m.
Presentation: 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Cost: \$13 Members
\$15 for non-members

Menu: Pig Pickin' Buffet

Pulled BBQ Pork

Corn on the Cob, Baked Beans, Corn Bread

Tossed Salad with Ranch and Italian Dressings

Brownies

Iced Tea, Water and Coffee

Please RSVP no later than March 18 to L C Williams at
303-382-7638 or lcwilliams@kpmg.com.

AGA Denver Chapter, February 15, 2005, Board Minutes

Attendees: Beth Machann, Pat Mulcahy, Glen Struempf, L.C. Williams, Karl Greve, Sandy Blanscet, Jeff Hart

Approval of January Minutes – Minutes Approved

Treasurer's Report - Pat Distributed an updated budget status and financial statement. Pat will correct the calculations to include totals for each area.

February Meeting update/March Meeting Planning – L.C. reported that there are 36 RSVP's so far for the February 23rd meeting. This is the membership appreciation lunch and he was surprised that we hadn't had a higher response. The deadline for RSVP'ing is the 20th. There are a few people who are interested in joining, so Beth will bring applications.

The chapter will host an audio conference on March 2, 2005 and the preliminary feedback was over 40 people. We will offer this free to members and \$10 to non-members. In order to keep costs down, the chapter will not provide lunch. Attendees will be instructed to eat before, after or arrange to buy something at the hotel. L.C. is getting some food options from the hotel. A flier will be sent out soon.

Jeff has confirmed that Andrew Romanoff will speak at the March 23, 2005 meeting.

Awards Banquet – Jean was unable to attend the meeting, but sent some information related to her contact at Marriott West and their costs. The board would like to look at other options to see if we can find something at a reduced cost. The date of the awards dinner is May 18, 2005.

Membership ideas – Sylvia was unable to attend, however she has prepared a letter to go out to old members and a flyer to prospective members. The board reviewed these and think they are great. They would like to add Leadership opportunities to the benefits section of the flier. In addition, it was suggested that the Denver Chapter's website be included on the flier and the letter.

Scholarship update – No update was given.

PDC – Glenn gave an update on the sessions and speakers. The brochure is almost ready to go out. The lunch speaker for the 26th is still needed. Beth will contact Mike Locatis the city's CIO to see if he would speak.

Other – Jeff and Pat reported on the National Leadership Conference they attended. The NLC was the most attended, with over 560 people. Jeff is very excited about the direction the National Office and new Executive Director are going. They will be hiring a PR firm to work with AGA in name recognition. March is CGFM month. Beth will try to contact the Governor's Office for some proclamation.

Education Corner:

CPEs: Earn CPEs through on-line classes using SMART-PROS;
<http://education.smartpros.com/main> (Financial Management Network)

CDFM: Sponsored through ASMC. To apply:
<http://www.asmc certification.com>

CGFM: Sponsored through AGA. To apply:
<http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/cgfmdefault.aspx>

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY:

CGFM Exam 3 Study Guide Now Available!

Be sure to order the new Study Guide for CGFM Exam 3: *Governmental Financial Management and Control* to help in your preparation for the examination.

Check the AGA National web site for details.

Career Corner:

Federal Civil Service employment: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

Denver City employment: <http://www.denvergov.org/Jobs/jobsm.asp>

Colorado State employment: <http://www.state.co.us/jobinfo.html>

AGA Career Bank listings: <http://www.aga.careerbank.com>

AGA Community Service: ATTN: Members!!!

Please provide suggestions for our next project.

Scholarship Program:

Scholarship program included two \$1000 scholarships.

Treasurer's Report:

Pat will bring an updated budget statement to the next meeting.

JOB OPPORTUNITY:

Financial Assistant Position

Federal Highway Administration, Lakewood, Colorado

- Incumbent works under the leadership of the Financial Manager, and provides advice and recommendations on a wide range of management, financial, and program-related activities to the Financial Manager, other division office staff officials, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and local government entities in delivering the Federal-aid highway and transportation program. This involves performing a variety of duties in the areas of financial management, procurement and contract administration, training, and other phases of financial and administrative activities.
- The incumbent conducts in-depth studies and analyses of management problems encountered by the Division, the Colorado DOT, or by local governmental entities. The incumbent frequently represents the Financial Manager on steering committees and in other meetings to resolve complex problems and to advance a variety of significant management projects. This position plays an integral role in delivering the Federal-aid highway program to the State, and in authorizing Federal reimbursement for transportation projects.
- Contact: Douglas Bennett 720-963-3030 douglas.bennett@fhwa.dot.gov

Denver Chapter Membership Drive. Let's share with others the many benefits of joining AGA and **Resolve to Recruit in 2005**. All members are challenged to recruit at least one new AGA member by April 27th. As an incentive, the member who recruits the most new AGA members will receive a grand prize of AGA merchandise. Also, everyone who recruits at least one new AGA member will be entered into a drawing to win dinner for two at an exclusive restaurant in Orlando during the 2005 National PDC. Also, your local chapter will recognize every new recruiter at the local PDC.

Encourage potential members and new members to attend the annual PDC on April 26th and 27th.

For more information on membership contact sylvia.taylor-porter@dfas.mil or visit www.agacgfm.org.

Current news from National:

Call for 2005 National Awards Nominations

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. In many cases, individuals do not have to be members of AGA to be eligible. All nominations are due Friday, March 18, and awards will be presented during AGA's Professional Development Conference & Exposition in Orlando, FL July 10 – 13.

Current News Topic from AGA Today:

Databases Called Lax With Personal Information

By Jonathan Krim, Washington Post Staff Writer, Friday, February 25, 2005

- The Social Security numbers of millions of Americans, including Vice President Cheney and celebrity heiress Paris Hilton, are available to many subscribers of a widely used information database company, U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) charged yesterday.
- Schumer called one feature offered by Westlaw an "egregious" invitation to identity theft. The "People-Find" feature lets some Westlaw users type in any name and receive personal data about that individual, culled from public records, including addresses and Social Security numbers.
- Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) yesterday showed examples of personal information obtained from Westlaw, an online database. (Melina Mara -- The Washington Post)
- Westlaw's subscribers include government and law-enforcement agencies, law firms, corporations and news-gathering organizations. Westlaw, a division of Thomson Corp., said Social Security information is restricted to government agencies and a small number of corporations that need it, such as insurance companies investigating fraud.
- "Fewer than 10 non-government customers have access to this type of information," the company said in a written statement. "Furthermore, our terms of use restricting access go beyond federal law and current industry standards."
- But Schumer said the information is too easily available to any level of employee, adding that his investigation was prompted by complaints from consumers. He said the company has ignored his requests to restrict access to only those individuals who demonstrate they need the information, such as law-enforcement officers.
- Schumer's concerns add to a controversy over companies that buy and sell such data with little oversight to protect personal information.
- Yesterday, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) said the panel would hold a hearing in response to the recent theft of Social Security numbers and other financial data of more than 100,000 people from ChoicePoint Inc., a Georgia-based database firm.
- After setting up accounts with the company, identity thieves were able to gather information on at least 145,000 individuals.
- "It's time to turn some sunshine on these developments so the public can understand how and why their personal information is being used," said Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.) in requesting hearings.
- In the House, Rep. Joe Barton (R-Tex.), head of the Energy and Commerce Committee, has directed his staff to investigate the storage and security practices of database companies.
- Schumer said comprehensive legislation is needed in an area that is largely unregulated at the federal level and governed by a patchwork of sometimes-conflicting state laws.
- California, for example, requires companies to report breaches of their systems that result in exposure of personal data, a law that prompted disclosure of the theft at ChoicePoint.
- Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) yesterday showed examples of personal information obtained from Westlaw, an online database. (Melina Mara -- The Washington Post)
- Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) has proposed a similar federal law, which has been opposed by many technology and database companies.
- In a news conference, at which were shown reproductions of Web pages displaying personal data of famous people, Schumer detailed how his staff was able to quickly retrieve Social Security numbers and addresses of former attorney general John D. Ashcroft, former homeland security secretary Tom Ridge, executives of Westlaw and others.
- They tried President Bush, Schumer said, but his address came up as 1400 Pennsylvania Ave., instead of the White House's address of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
- "Westlaw's service could be entitled 'Identity Theft for Dummies,'" Schumer said. "To my mind, what bank robbery was to the Depression era, identity theft is to the information age. Everyone's susceptible."
- In a written statement, Thomson West, the firm that operates Westlaw, said it shares Schumer's concerns about privacy and identity theft. But the company denied the senator's claims that it has been unresponsive to his inquiries.
- Researchers at The Washington Post, a Westlaw subscriber, sought to replicate Schumer's exercise and found that only the first five digits of an individual's Social Security number were displayed.
- But a Schumer spokesman said that a researcher at a major corporation not involved in credit checks or other investigations was able to get the complete numbers.
- A spokesman for LexisNexis, a Westlaw competitor, said law-enforcement agencies, insurance and financial institutions can also get full Social Security data through LexisNexis's service. But even if a potential customer is in the right industry, he said, they are screened to ensure they are legitimate.
- Privacy experts say that in addition to raising questions about how well personal information is protected, the disclosures indicate an extreme overuse of Social Security numbers for identification.
- "It has become the default identifier" for many commercial businesses, banks and Web sites, said Ari Schwartz, associate director of the Center for Democracy and Technology, a Washington group that studies digital rights and privacy issues.
- When personal information is compromised, a Social Security number can be used as a tool for identity theft.
- Many privacy advocates have urged businesses to create unique identification numbers for customers to use.
- "The reliance on the Social Security number has created a false sense of security for businesses and a source of vulnerability for consumers," Schwartz said.

AGA National Scholarship Program:

Call for 2005 National Scholarship Applications

Are you or a family member pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies in disciplines such as accounting, auditing, budgeting, economics, finance, information technology, public administration, etc.? If so, consider applying for an AGA National Academic Scholarship today!

Each year, AGA National awards:

- Up to six \$1,000 full-time merit scholarships to AGA members and their family members,
- Up to two \$500 part-time merit scholarships to AGA members and their family members, and
- Up to one \$1,000 community service scholarship

The deadline for receipt of applications is April 1, 2005. Apply now and take full advantage of your AGA membership.