FEBRUARY 2004

THE WASHINGTON CONNECTION

AGA®
WASHINGTON DC, CHAPTER
ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS

JFMIP *Update*

February 12, 2004 Breakfast Meeting

Ms. Karen Alderman

At our February breakfast, Karen Cleary Alderman will present a perspective on the cross cutting financial management issues facing Federal Agencies and discuss the JFMIP focus in the upcoming year. This includes updates on Financial Systems Framework, Financial System Requirements initiatives, Core Financial System testing in 2003 and incremental testing in 2004, and education and outreach efforts.

Karen Cleary Alderman is the Executive Director of the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program (JFMIP), an interagency organization sponsored by the General Accounting Office, Department of Treasury, the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management, and the General Services Administration. Her responsibilities include developing and directing interagency projects to improve financial management in the federal government, issuing government-wide financial system requirements, testing and qualifying financial system software for federal use, and maintaining an ongoing knowledgebase to communicate with all stakeholders.

Prior to joining the JFMIP in 1998, Ms. Alderman served as the Director for Performance Measures and Results and Travel Reengineering at the Department of Defense (DoD) where she was responsible for the DoD implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act and spearheaded the DoD Travel Reengineering initiatives. Ms. Alderman has served in the Senior Executive Service since 1983 and has over 20 years experience in financial management, research, policy evaluation, economics, planning, programming, budgeting, and manpower and personnel management. She served as the Department of Defense Director of Plans and Resources, Director of Productivity and Civilian Requirements and as Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy.

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February Breakfast

Thursday, February 12th- Breakfast - 7:30 - 8:30am
Bank of America, 730 15th St. NW
"JFMIP Update"
Ms. Karen Alderman, Executive Director, JFMIP
(Joint Financial Management Improvement Program)
Members: $22.00, Non-Members: $35.00

Bank of America's Office Bldg, 730 15th Street NW *(across from the Treasury Dept)* ***Metro****: McPherson Square, (Blue/Orange lines -2 blocks) Exit at either Vermont Ave/White House or 14th Franklin Square. Walk one block to H St., then go one block on H to 15th St. You'll see the American Bar Association building on the corner of 15th and H. Bank of America offices are next door at 730 15th St. NW.* ***Metro Center****, (Red line-3 blocks) Take exit for 13th and G Sts. Walk two blocks west on G St. to 15th St. Turn right and cross 15th St. and Pennsylvania Ave/New York Ave. Bank of America offices are at 730 15th St.* ***Parking****: Pay parking is available at Colonial Parking, 1420 New York Ave. NW, just east of 15th St.*

President's Message

by Bob Reid, President

Mr. Bob Reid, President

It's almost time for AGA's annual awards recognition of individuals who have made a difference in financial management. I'd like to ask you to suggest nominees for AGA-DC Chapter awards and National awards. You'll see details on page 15 of the newsletter describing the awards and giving contact information. This is your chance to put in a good word for people you'd like to see recognized.

If you haven't yet read the September 2003 JFMIP white paper, ***"The Federal Financial Management Workforce of the Future"****, by all means take a look at it. Although the title talks about the workforce of the future, the paper is really talking about the issues we face today. The paper is a guide for taking steps to meet today's needs and plan for tomorrow's challenges and can be found at http://www.jfmip.gov/jfmip/download/Otherreports/federal_financial_mgmt_workforce_final.doc.*

To improve our financial management performance, we must transform the workforce from one dealing principally with transaction processing to one providing broader analysis and decision support. The leadership and vision to meet this transformation challenge will include a strategy to develop and retain a multi-skilled, analytical workforce with the core competencies that support this broader financial management career concept. To do this, the report encourages managers to train and develop current employees as well as to recruit and retain new employees. To be a vital part of this new workforce, current employees should seek further development, training, education and certification.

As you know, this is where AGA comes in and has always been. One of AGA's principal objectives is to provide continuing education and training for accounting and accountability professionals. Our AGA-DC Programs Director, Phyllis Hunter, has ensured that all our meeting speakers give current information on relevant financial management topics. She has also arranged several CPE sessions this year on topics ranging from ***"A New Paradigm for Implementing COTS"*** *to* ***"New Banking Solutions"*** *to* ***"Updates on the GAO Yellow Book"****.*

We encourage our members to seek professional certification, particularly AGA's Certified Government - Financial Manager (CGFM) designation. You'll find more information on the CGFM elsewhere in the newsletter. At our February 12 breakfast meeting, in addition to Karen Alderman's update on JFMIP, you'll hear from our AGA Regional CGFM Chair, Stu Sklamm. I look forward to seeing you there!

Finally, within the next month, we'll be emailing you a member survey to seek your input on AGA-DC Chapter activities. Please take a few minutes to complete and return the survey. Your input will help us to make this a better chapter that responds to your needs.

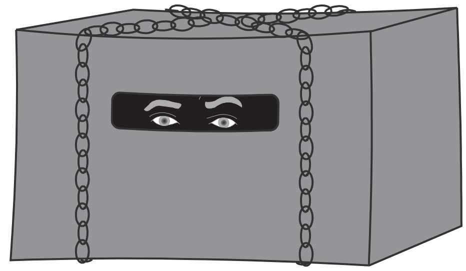
Best wishes,
Bob Reid

E-mail Mailing List

Would you like to receive e-mail reminders of our monthly meetings and conferences? If so, please go to http://www.agadc.org to sign up for our mailing list in the Member Services section of the website.

Inside the Black Box

by Simcha Kuritzky, CGFM CPA



Navigating the Transaction Jungle—Part 3 (continued from May, 2000)

The SGL has issued guidance listing standard transaction categories. The listing can be very confusing, however, as many transactions are similar, and it may not be immediately obvious why certain accounts are used in one transaction and not in another. To supplement the listing, I present an analysis of appropriation postings. SGL entries are listed in square brackets.

Transaction: Appropriation-Type Activity

Archetypal Entry:	**debit**	**credit**
budgetary	4119 (authority source)	4450 (funds status)
proprietary	1010 (cash)	3101 (equity)

This entry increases available authority. To decrease authority, the debits and credits are reversed [A105].

Purpose: To record appropriation activity for other than special and trust funds. This analysis does not cover appropriations of receipts or transfers of obligated funds. Include the cash entries only if a warrant accompanies the authority. Record a receivable or payable if a warrant or transfer is pending, but not if the authority is only anticipated.

Account Selection:
<u>Authority Source</u>--Generally this is 4119 [A104]. Liquidation authority would use 4111 for debt or 4112 for deficiency [A104]. Loan authority would use 4115 for the original subsidy, 4118 for the reestimated subsidy, or 4117 for the administrative expense [A104]. For a reappropriation of old-year funds, use 4396 for the old fund [A106, A112] and 4150 for the current fund [A110]. Account 4396 is also used for reductions of authority [A130] including special rescissions reported as a reduction. Most rescissions, however, use 4392 for current-year authority and 4393 for old-year authority [A132]. Most transfers of current-year authority use 4170 and prior-year use 4190 [A246, A249, A251]. If the transfer has occurred, but is not yet been reflected in cash balances, then the receiving fund uses 4171 [A282,] and the paying fund uses 4172 [A283]. Allocation transfers of current-year authority use 4175 and prior-year authority use 4176 [A214, A220, A226-A232].

<u>Funds Status</u>--If the funds are subject to apportionment, use 4450 if they are to be apportioned or 4430 if the apportionment is deferred [A126]. If apportioned funds are transferred or reappropriated, you may use 4510 [A106, A214, A220] or use 4450 and record the apportionment separately [A116]. Use 4620 if the funds are not subject to apportionment. If the appropriation was previously anticipated, reduce the anticipation instead (generally account 4120) [A102 to anticipate and A104 to realize]. If expired funds are being reapportioned, post 4650 in the expired fund [A112]. If the funds are temporarily unavailable (such as with a continuing resolution), then use 4395 [A128]. Use account 4420 if the rescission is anticipated [A137 to anticipate the pending rescission, A136 to realize it]. If the appropriation will substitute for already obligated borrowing authority, use account 4140 [A155]. Use 4160 for current-year authority or 4180 for prior-year if the transfer was anticipated [A242, A244 to anticipate and A246, A248 to realize].

<u>Cash</u>--Generally use account 1010. If the warrant is delayed for a rescission, use 2990 [A132]. For transfers between agencies, use account 1330 as the receivable [A224, A230, A282] and 2150 as the payable [A231, A283]. Do not post proprietary entries when an anticipation is recorded.

<u>Equity</u>--All new appropriations use account 3101, as do reapportionments in the current fund [A110]. When withdrawing funds for a reapportionment [A106, A112] or rescission [A130, A132, A136], use 3106. Use 3102 when funds are transferred in [A220, A228, A232, A246, A249] and 3103 when transferred out [A214, A226, A230, A231, A248, A251]. Do not post proprietary entries when an anticipation is recorded.

The SGL concepts in this column represent the opinions of the Author and are not endorsed by AMS, the AGA, the USSGL Board, or the Treasury Financial Management Service. Guidance is available at the USSGL web site maintained by the Treasury at <u>www.fms.treas.gov/ussgl.</u> Please send comments, suggestions, and critiques to <u>Simcha.Kuritzky@ams.com.</u>

CGFM Program

With the start of the New Year, I am pleased to announce a renewed effort for the CGFM Program—the hiring of Pete Rose, CGFM, to direct AGA's professional certification program.

Many of you already know Pete. A strong advocate of certification throughout his career, Pete has been a member of AGA's Professional Certification Board since its inception and served as its chairman for several years. He was one of the first AGA members to receive the credential, holding certificate No. 10.

He is also a popular instructor of what many consider to be the most difficult CGFM preparatory course, Governmental Accounting, Financial Reporting and Budgeting, which is offered through a partnership with AGA and Management Concepts. You could say he wrote the book on the subject since he was one of the main authors of the newly published CGFM Exam 2 Study Guide. His students praise Pete's skills, saying he pulls not only from his vast knowledge of state and local government reporting standards, but his experience as a former finance director.

When it comes to knowledge about the CGFM Program, commitment to the goals and enthusiasm for its growth, Pete has earned his stripes.

I am pleased that he will work with the CGFM Program in a more active and visible role. Pete will expand AGA's outreach efforts by meeting with senior government officials in federal, state and local governments to develop training programs and increase recognition of the program. Pete will work to expand the reach of the CGFM throughout the entire accountability community. He will be guiding the last two study guides through their final review phases, and he will also be available to help individual chapters with any CGFM issues that arise.

Pete has said again and again that he believes the CGFM can become the "premier certification in government," and with his drive and the enthusiasm of our members, we will achieve our goal.

So many chapters have been showing real creativity recently in promoting the CGFM certification to their members and their colleagues in the accountability profession. Let me share some of their ideas:

- *The Nashville Chapter's CGFM Committee announced last year that it would fully fund CGFM exam fees for four members whose names were pulled in a drawing. The only catch is that the winners must sit for all three exams by September of this year.*
- *The Mid-Missouri Chapter contributes $50 toward the exam application fee for the first 10 new CGFM applicants in the chapter. Milton Barr, CGFM, the chapter's CGFM coordinator, arranges a study group. The $50 offer is publicized in the chapter's newsletter and website, and is discussed at chapter meetings. "It is a great incentive for prospective CGFMs to get off the fence and get moving," said chapter president Vandee DeVore, CGFM.*
- *The Denver Chapter's Jeff Hart, also a member of the National Executive Committee, said he recently had a very successful meeting with the Denver City Auditor, enlisting his support for AGA membership and the CGFM Program. Hart emphasized the benefits that AGA membership and advanced certification could bring to his office — among them inexpensive training events, a more skilled staff, additional credibility, and opportunities for his staff to network and learn best practices and problem-solving ideas. Hart also brought along some of AGA's publications, and the state and local government issue of the Journal of Government Financial Management got high praise.*
- *The New York Capital Chapter is distributing the CGFM brochure to attendees at all AGA events. CGFM attendees receive the brochure with a letter urging them to encourage others to earn the certification. Those who are not CGFMs receive the brochure and a flyer describing the "top reasons" to earn the certification. The chapter is also launching a CGFM contest —the members who sponsor the most CGFM candidates earn a gift certificate at the end of one year.*

These efforts are just what the CGFM Program needs. Nothing promotes the CGFM more than the positive experiences of other members. Fee reductions and gift certificates certainly don't hurt either!

A note on the study guides—AGA volunteers are diligently finishing the remaining two guides for Exam 1 and 3. The publication of all three guides will greatly expand our reach and address the different study styles of all our members. While some prefer the face-to-face feedback found in a traditional classroom setting, others prefer to study on their own. We have been pleased with the success of the CGFM Exam 2 Study Guide. Members are telling us that it is a great tool to help them prepare for the exam. The guide is available on AGA's website at www.agacgfm.org.

In closing, I would remind all members to keep their CPE documentation, as the audit for 2002 is under way. We recommend holding on to the paperwork for at least three years. Members may receive a letter asking for documentation to back up the earned CPE hours listed on CGFM renewal applications. Questions can be directed to Katya Silver, Director of Professional Certification Administration, at ksilver@agacgfm.org or by calling 800.AGA.7211, ext. 313.

Thanks to all the members for all the hard work you do to advance the CGFM certification.

William S. Taylor

CGFM Renewal

It is the beginning of 2004, and that means your annual AGA/CGFM renewal invoice should soon be arriving in the mail. If you are a CGFM holder, here are a few important reminders about your renewal:

- CGFM renewal is annual and is due by March 31, 2004.
- The CGFM renewal fee is separate from your AGA dues but is billed on the same invoice. The 2004 CGFM renewal fees are as folllows: $30 for AGA members or $65 for non-members.
- Unless you've already paid your dues for 2004, your annual invoice should arrive in February. If you have recently moved or changed jobs, please update your contact information with AGA national office by calling 1.800.AGA.7211 or through the "Members Only" portion of the AGA website (www.agacgfm.org). Please also contact AGA if you do not receive an invoice by March 15th, 2004.
- If your company or organization pays for your AGA and/or CGFM dues, please follow up with them to make sure that payment was made.
- All renewing CGFM holders must be compliant with the CGFM Continuing Professional Education (CPE) requirement of earning at least 80 CPE hours in their two-year CPE cycle, with at least 20 hours in each year. The hours earned must be in government financial management topics or related technical subjects applicable to government financial management areas. For more information on CGFM CPE requirements, please visit AGA website at www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/maintain/.
- Your two-year CGFM CPE cycle depends on the year your CGFM was awarded:
  - If you earned your CGFM in 1994, 1995, 1997, 1999 or 2001, your last two-year CPE cycle just ended on December 31, 2003. If you do not have 80 CPEs in 2002-2003, you can catch up during the grace period of January 1-March 31, 2004. Any hours completed towards a deficiency in one CPE cycle may not be counted towards the next cycle.
  - If you earned your CGFM in 1996, 1998, 2000 or 2002, your current CPE cycle is 2003-2004.
- CGFM holders do not automatically have to send information on their CPE hours to AGA, but they need to keep records and complete backup documentation (such as certificates of completion) on all CPE activities for at least three years. This documentation may be requested by AGA if you are selected to be audited.
- All renewing CGFM holders and AGA members must adhere to the AGA Code of Ethics.
- Retirement status affects your CGFM renewal. You are considered retired if you have retired from and are no longer substantially working in the government financial management community. Contact the CGFM office to update your status if you have retired (or if you returned to work after being retired).

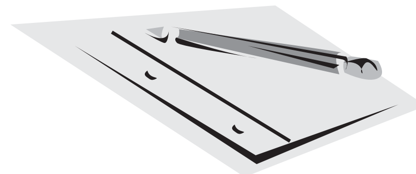
If you have any questions on CGFM renewal, please call the CGFM office at 1.800.AGA.7211, ext. 310 or 313 or send an emaill to *ksilver@agacgfm.org.*

Katya Silver
Director of Professional Certification Administration

JFMIP Update, February Breakfast Meeting (continued from page 1)

Prior to joining DoD, Ms. Alderman was a research associate at George Washington University's Center for Manpower Policy Studies, served on the staffs of the Presidential Commission on Military Compensation and the Defense Resources Management Study and served as a consultant to the government and industry on work force and manpower issues. Ms. Alderman co-authored books on the military, veterans issues, and women's labor force and child care issues and has published articles on financial management, performance measurement, productivity and process improvement. Ms. Alderman, a Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM), earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Rosemont College and a Masters of Arts in Public Affairs from George Washington University. She is active in professional associations including the American Society of Military Comptrollers and the Association of Government Accountants. She has received many awards including the President's Meritorious Executive Award, the Federal Computer Week "Federal 100" award, and the AGA National President’s Award. Ms. Alderman resides in Virginia with her husband Kim and her four children: Sean, Chris, Mike and Meg.

FFMIA Compliance Reality Check: Test Your Agency FFMIA IQ



Can your agency answer "true" to the following statements?

- Our financial system contains information to prepare auditable annual financial statements on an ongoing basis for day-to-day management of programs and operations.
- We have no problems with reconciliation, including reconciling fund balance with Treasury records.
- Our financial system contains financial information that is timely and accurate. Agency management uses this information to invest resources, reduce costs and oversee programs.
- Our integrated financial system provides automated month and year-end closing of SGL accounts and rollover of SGL account balances.
- Our auditors have given our agency a positive assurance that our system is in substantial compliance with FFMIA.

If you can't answer "true" to all the above statements, come to the AGA-DC and GWSCPA 3rd Annual Conference on "Achieving FFMIA Compliance." Hear from CFOs and other high level financial managers about their efforts in achieving FFMIA compliance by:

- Integrating financial management systems,
- Improving reconciliation procedures,
- Achieving accurate and timely reporting,
- Complying with the SGL,
- Adhering to federal accounting standards, and
- Strengthening security over information systems.

Dates: May 4 and 5, 2004
Time: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
Location: George Washington University's Cafritz Conference Center

Conference Registration:
AGA-DC and GWSCPA Members:
$300 early registration ($350 late registration – after April 16th)

Nonmembers:
$350 early registration ($400 late registration – after April 16th)

Continuing Education:
15 CPE (The GWSCPA Educational Foundation is providing CPE credit for both GWSCPA and AGA-DC members. The Foundation is a registered CPE sponsor with: DC / MD / NJ #845.)

For more information visit www.agadc.org.

Member Services - Chinese New Year's Dinner Event
Food, Fun, and Friends

In the Chinese lunar calendar, January 22, 2004 is the start of the Lunar New Year—the Year of the Monkey. To celebrate with a little monkey business, some 55 members, spouses and friends braved the sleet storm on Saturday, January 17th to attend the AGADC Member Services/Sam Mok Chinese New Year Dinner. Karl Boettcher with the assistance of Anna Hui once again coordinated this popular event at the China Garden Restaurant in Rosslyn, Virginia. Located in the former USA Today building at 1100 Wilson Boulevard, the restaurant provided free parking in the building or was just a short walk from the Rosslyn Metro stop.

We were served a sumptuous, authentic Chinese New Year feast. In true Chinese banquet style, 8 to 10 people seated at large round tables shared each dish of the ten-course meal, as one dish followed another on the zhuan tan (lazy susan turn-table). The first course was a large platter of Chinese cold cuts of beef, pork and seafood. This was followed by crab and asparagus soup, roast chicken Hong Kong style, pork tenderloin with kingdom sauce, and vegetarian braised mushrooms with baby bok choy. Two very impressive dishes were lobster in the shell with scallions and ginger and the restaurant's signature dish, marinated diced filet mignon with lemon grass. At Chinese banquets, the diners eat the main courses without rice, but rice was served later in the meal to satisfy those who weren't already stuffed! The dinner concluded with two special Chinese New Year's desserts—crispy lotus puffs and sweetened tapioca and taro soup.

This was a very relaxed and enjoyable evening where everyone had an opportunity to greet old acquaintances and meet new friends. Isn't that what the New Year is about! If you weren't one to brave the elements that stormy Saturday night, come next year for a real treat and a fun event!

—Judy Ochs

Local Happenings
WASHINGTON DC, CHAPTER

Annual JFMIP Conference – March 9, 2004

Mark your calendar now to join your colleagues on March 9th at the 33rd Annual JFMIP Conference at the Hilton Washington & Towers, 1919 Connecticut Avenue NW in Washington, DC. This year's theme is "Improving Performance with Useful Financial Information." Confirmed keynote speakers are OMB Director Joshua Bolten, OPM Director Kay Coles James, Public Company Accounting Oversight Board Chairman William McDonough, and Comptroller General David Walker.

For a complete listing of featured distinguished speakers from both public and private sectors, refer to http://www.jfmip.gov/jfmip/04_march_conference.htm

Register online at https://register.grad.usda.gov/conferences/jfmip2004/jfmip2004regform.cfm

Still a bargain at $150 for 8 hours of CPE. Sign up today.

Ski trip to Liberty Mountain Resort - February 13th

Membership Services is sponsoring a day ski trip to Liberty Mountain Resort on Friday February 13, 2004. This will be in partnership with the Northern Virginia, Montgomery/PG and Baltimore chapters. We will meet at the Clock Tower circle entrance area at 10am. Liberty is conveniently located just one hour from the DC area. Just take 495 to 270 North to Fredrick. Then take 15 North to Emmitsburg exit into South Seton Avenue. Left on to Rt 140 west which becomes Rt. 16. Follow Rt. 16 to 116E. Right on 116E for 3 miles. Complete ski packages (equipment, lessons and lift tickets) are available for AGA members at discounted group prices ($46.00 Learn to Ski/Snowboard - limited mountain, *** $56.00 Intermediate and advanced - all mountain, and *** $30.00 lift ticket only – all mountain). The date of this activity may be subject to change due to weather conditions. The alternate date is Friday February 20. Please check the AGADC web site for any last minute changes. If you are interested in attending this activity, or for more information, please contact *karl.boettcher@fms.treas.gov* (202.874.6131).

DC Chapter Leadership Wants To Hear From You!

We want to know more about how the DC Chapter can better serve our community. A web enabled survey will be emailed to you in the near future. The survey asks questions about you, your interests, and your expectations for the DC Chapter regarding chapter meetings and seminars, community service, and communications. Please take a few minutes to respond. Your feedback is key in enabling us to do a better job for you.

Newsletter Comments or Suggestions?

Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding the newsletter? Do you have an article you'd like to see in print? The deadline for submitting articles to appear in the March 2004 issue is February 13, 2004. Please send your comments and contributions to the newsletter editor, Diane Wright at *diane.wright@ams.com.*

Illustrative newsletter photos: © Chris Ivey, Ivey-League Interactive

Notes from the January 8th, 2004 Luncheon Meeting

At the luncheon , Wendy Comes, Frank Seng, John Cox, and Beth Ewing spoke. The following are notes from each of their speeches.

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New FASAB Initiatives

Wendy Comes, Executive Director of the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB)

- To enhance due process, FASAB will put more pre-release materials on their website, email agendas for their hearings, be more diligent in soliciting and providing input (especially among the Inspector General community), and hold more public hearings. New standards will drive changes in accounting systems and reporting requirements, so input from the accounting community on exposure drafts is important.
- FASAB's current priority projects include developing a conceptual framework, Required Supplementary Stewardship Information (RSSI), trust funds, and natural resources. New web site will be unveiled mid-January which will include "Current Text", PDF files that provide statements and technical bulletins arranged by subject matter.
- The conceptual framework will address such issues as: How do reporting objectives influence decisions and are they correct? Are elements and statements all defined and credible? How are statements built from elements? Are assets owned or controlled? When do promises become liabilities, and how do we adjust liability balances to recognize changes in estimates?
- RSSI is the fourth category of information. For agencies like Social Security Administration, it is the most important information. Auditor only has to review, but does not perform tests. Statement 25 moved Social Insurance statement to basic financial statements, risk assumed to RSI.
- For Heritage Assets and Stewardship Land, the Exposure Draft is out, and it proposes adding a line on the balance sheet for these but with no dollar amount; the non-financial information would be in the notes (this is similar to FASB on museum collections). RSSI also includes stewardship investments.
- Trust funds in the federal government are really a reservation for a specific purpose (which raises questions as to nature of the promises), whereas in the private sector, trust funds are fiduciary deposit funds. Earmarked funds have revenue and do not produce a liability; FASAB plans to have these funds show the earmarked portion of cumulative results. Fiduciary holdings are commingled with federal funds in the Treasury. Currently the assets are absorbed into federal entities' assets and a liability is recognized to the other entity--does this exaggerate federal assets?

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Notes from the January 8th, 2004 Luncheon Meeting, Continued

At the luncheon , Wendy Comes, Frank Seng, John Cox, and Beth Ewing spoke. The following are notes from each of their speeches.

- For natural resources, the first focus is on recognizing leases to extract oil and natural gas on federal lands as an asset. Agencies are involved in researching this issue, and on whether or how to report inventory of unproven reserves, values, and sales.
- FASAB's future projects include looking at liabilities, property plant & equipment, government corporations, risk assumed, and linking cost and performance.
- Some agencies work out accounting issues among themselves. This does not introduce the resolution into the literature for others to follow, and also does not assist new auditors on their first audit of the agency.

Opening the Door to a Nationwide Depository Network

Frank Seng, National Park Service

- National Park Service (NPS) and Treasury's Financial Management Service (FMS) worked together to create the first electronic banking system (EBS) for the federal government. It is installed on an Internet web site, and was designed to be used by rangers and other outdoor workers. When Mr. Seng came to NPS, he found float was 45 days long, and the cash reconciliation process took months. He wanted to automate the SF-215 Deposit Slip and sought the help of Treasury. This was the birth of EBS, which is under Treasury supervision. Rangers prepare a remittance report at the end of their shift for fees collected. They specify a purpose code, which the program uses to determine the Treasury account used. Incidents of adjustments have dropped to nearly zero. The only problems are typing the amounts in wrong. The system compares totals and subtotals and checks for what areas the user is authorized. The ranger needs to mail the deposits to the lockbox. If the deposit is not received in 2 days, reconciler calls the park to ensure the deposit was mailed.
- NPS can now forecast revenue streams. They've also addressed a potential public safety issue, in that if robbers knew how much cash had been on hand at the ranger's station, they'd be a likely target. Now large parks like Grand Canyon deposit several times a day into their TGA (Treasury General Account, account at a bank designated by FMS as an agent).
- EBS reconciles with Cashlink every day, so FMS doesn't have to wait for the SF-224 at the end of the month. Now FMS is pursuing the GWA to eliminate the SF-224. They are also developing a similar program for processing bank card charges. The cost of the EBS to the user is a tiny percentage of the money handled. Much of the actual cost is covered by FMS's appropriation.

Extending E-commerce capabilities

John Cox, Bank of America

- Bank of America is developing Global Advice Delivery, an automated remittance advice system. Rapid internet growth has increased coordination between consumers and trading partners. Organizations want to focus on what they do best and outsource other activities like finance.
- One application for this technology is in health care, which is paper intensive, and there are issues with duplicate claims and customer service calls. Networks allow everyone in the workplace to have access to new systems. HIPAA compliance for portability of records encourages keeping those records electronically.
- GA is a payment outsourcing service. The user sends a single file for any kind of payment and the bank makes the payment through ACH, wire, physical check, foreign draft, etc. The agent then sends remittance advice through paper or electronically. GA puts the advice on the Internet, which allows even small entities to receive it electronically. GA sends advice to a bank-hosted web site. The payer or payee can enroll in the system.
- When the bank processes the payment, the bank notifies the payee that payment information is available on the web site (such as the invoices paid by the EFT). The advice can be downloaded and entered into their accounting system. Information stays on web site for two months.
- There are significant savings in the production of paper, postage, and time fielding queries from trading partners.
- Applications include accounts payable, payroll, insurance benefits, travel/expense reimbursement.

Show Me the Money!

Beth Ewing, Bank of America

- Federal cash flow isn't much different from that of private-sector retailers. Regardless of how and why cash is collected, it has to be deposited in a timely manner, accounted for, and reconciled "book to bank." Each work site needs a bank as a commercial agent, and often an agency requires multiple banks, with different cultures and terminologies. FMS uses about 250 banks as TGA. USPS reduced to 10 banks because they can easily transport deposits.
- Currently deposits are made with paper SF-215 forms prepared by the agency, and the bank has to key in the information and verify it, duplicating the effort. Sometimes armed carriers are needed to transport cash.
- Prototype deposit solution is an FMS machine like an ATM to accept agency deposits. It would create an electronic SF-215 and would count the cash and look for counterfeits. The notes can be entered in any orientation.
- Checks can now be imaged and the funds transferred without physically moving the check (enabled by "Check 21" Check Truncation Act of the 21st Century). The machine can't read the amount, but would record the bank/account information.
- Each user would be defined in a database and assigned to an Agency Location Code. The user would sign in with a PIN rather than using a plastic card. After the deposit, the user would get a printout listing the cash deposited by denomination and with a picture of each check.
- These machines will be tested in the second half of 2004 by NCR and Bank of America, possibly in Atlanta. They will only be deployed in secure facilities, and would only be infrequently emptied by armored carrier. Don't need armored carrier to pick up checks. Once Check 21 is in effect, the checks can be shredded by the machine once the deposit is verified.
- Check 21 was approved in part in response to the grounding of airplanes after 9/11. Most checks move by air so no checks could be transferred for days.

—Simcha Kuritzky

Chapter Meetings, Talk it up and ATTEND!

Board Meetings

Time: 12:00-1:00pm
Location: JFMIP, 1990 K Street, Room 430

Tuesday February 3rd — *Tuesday April 6th*
Tuesday March 2nd — *Tuesday May 4th*

(Directors, Officers, Members Welcome)

Luncheons/Breakfasts

Date: Thursday, February 12th - Breakfast
Location: Bank of America, 730 15th St. NW
Time: 7:30 – 8:30 am
Speaker: Ms. Karen Alderman, Executive Director, JFMIP (Joint Financial Management Improvement Program)
Topic: JFMIP Update

Date: Thursday, March 11th - Luncheon
Location: Bank of America, 730 15th St. NW
Time: 11:30 – 1:30pm
Speaker: Ms. Jolene Lauria-Sullens, Budget Director, Dept. of Justice; President, Budget Officers Advisory Council
Topic: TBD

Date: Thursday, May 13th - Luncheon
Location: Pier 7 Restaurant-Channel Inn, 650 Water St. SW
Time: 11:30-1:30pm
Speaker: Dr. Linda M. Combs, Chief Financial Officer, EPA (invited)
Topic: TBD

Special Events and Member Activities

Event/Activity: Awards Dinner/Reception
Date: Wednesday, April 21st
Location: Pier 7 Restaurant-Channel Inn, 650 Water St. SW
Time: Cash Bar 5:30 pm, Dinner 6:00 pm (Surf & Turf), Speaker 7:00 pm
Speaker: Ms. Sallyanne Harper, Chief of Mission Support/CFO, GAO

Education Events/Conferences

Event/Conference: Achieving FFMIA Compliance
Date: May 4th-5th
Location: George Washington University, Marvin Conference Center, 800 21st Street, NW
Speaker: Sally Thompson (principal author of GAO's recently released report on what is needed to achieve FFMIA accountability)

Event/Conference: National AGA Professional Development Conference
Date: June 27th-30th
Location: Washington
Speaker: "Technology: Powering the Accountability Age", Various Speakers

Washington DC Chapter AGA Board Meeting Minutes from Tuesday January 6, 2004

Ten Members of the board participated. The following topics were discussed:

- Remaining luncheons are: March 11 and May 13 at Pier 7. The February 12 meeting will be a breakfast at Bank of America, with Karen Alderman giving an update on JFMIP activities.
- April Awards Dinner at Pier 7 on Wednesday, April 21. (Please note change in place and date from past years.)
- Dr. Linda M. Combs from DOT is invited to speak at the May luncheon but acceptance is pending her Senate Confirmation.
- There will be a two-day educational conference on May 5th and 6th at The George Washington University's Marvin Center. The Education Committee and members of the Board are working out details.
- Ski Trip is scheduled for Friday, February 13th at Ski Liberty. This is a Family Event.
- A committee has been formed to conduct a Member Survey. Anyone interested in helping please contact Karen Alderman at karen.alderman@gsa.gov

The next Director's Meeting will be held at JFMIP on February 3, 2004.

AGA Washington Chapter
Membership Services Events 2003-2004

In an effort to provide our membership with a variety of social activities, Members Services is scheduling the following events for the coming membership year. These events represent some new initiatives and repeats of our most successful prior year's activities. We will again attempt to partner our activities with, local AGA chapters and other professional organizations. Also, watch for our participation in additional partnership activities being planned by other regional AGA chapters and by our own Community Service and Early Careers.

Date	Event	Partnership
February 13, 2004	**Ski trip to Liberty Mountain Resort** *Alternate date is February 20, 2004*	**NVA/Montgomery/PG/Baltimore Chapters**
March 13, 2004	**Tour of the National Cathedral**	**NVA/PG Chapters**
April, 2004	**Mt. Vernon Tour**	
May 30, 2004	**Wolf Trap Event**	
May/June, 2004	**Attend Baltimore Orioles or Northern Virginia Cannons Baseball Game**	**Baltimore Chapter** **NVA Chapter** **Early Careers**
June, 2004	**Golf Tournament**	**ASMC/KPMG**

Additional event information will be provided as the activity draws near and more information becomes available. Some of the activities may be subject to change due to our partnership with the GWSCPA, ASMC and the AGA - NVA, PG and Baltimore chapters. Please check your newsletter, web site or agency liaison for the latest event update. Due to advance notification requirements and space limitations, most activities will have a response cut off date. If you are interested in an activity please let us know as soon as possible. Send your responses or direct any questions to our chapter Member Services Director, Karl Boettcher at karl.boettcher@fms.treas.gov (202.874.6131).

Job Announcements

Job Type	Series	Agency	Announcement Number	Application Close Date	Contact
Staff Accountant	**SK-0510-14/14**	**Securities and Exchange Commission**	**ESHA-04-003-DC**	**03/02/2004**	**202.942.4150**
Accountant	**SK-0510-13/13**	**Securities and Exchange Commission**	**ESHA-03-060-DP**	**05/17/2004**	**202.942.4150**
Supervisory Auditor	**GS-0511-14/15**	**Department of Labor**	**ESA-OL-04-27**	**02/13/2004**	**202.693.1170**
Auditor	**GS-0511-11/13**	**Agency for International Development**	**03-29**	**03/19/2004**	**202.712.4189**
Auditor	**GS-0511-07/11**	**Agency for International Development**	**03-26**	**03/22/2004**	**202.712.4189**
Auditor	**GS-0511-12/13**	**Agency for International Development**	**03-27**	**03/22/2004**	**202.712.4189**
Auditor	**CG-0511-07/07**	**FDIC**	**WA183192-CG**	**02/28/2004**	**202.606.0974**
Auditor	**CG-0511-09/09**	**FDIC**	**WA183195-CG**	**02/28/2004**	**202.606.0974**
Auditor	**FP-0511-03/03**	**Agency for International Development**	**FS-04-03**	**04/07/2004**	**202.712.4189**

If your organization would like to list job announcements in the newsletter, please send announcement information to diane.wright@ams.com.

Call for AGA Volunteers - Put Your Skills to Work for the Community

The AGA is looking for volunteers to assist needy individuals in preparing tax returns. Many people don't realize how many poor and needy people in our community, including the homeless, have jobs. Most of them don't file tax returns or obtain their much needed refunds each year. By participating in this community service event, AGA volunteers use their professional and technical skills for the benefit of the community. There is no better way to show our concern for our fellow citizens than by supporting this event. You can sharpen your skills for the tax season while helping others; and there is free training. Our goal is to get enough volunteers to have an AGA team participate in this together. Find more details at *www.AGADC.org* or Andy Killgore, Community Services Chair, at *akillgore@gpo.gov* or 202.512.0040.

Hope to see you there!

AGA's Second Annual National Leadership Conference (NLC)

Act quickly to register for AGA's National Leadership Conference, Feb. 19-20, 2004, in Washington, D.C. The theme of this year's conference is "First Responders: Financial Leadership in an Era of Crisis," and it will bring together federal, state and local government leaders to discuss common challenges.

In an age of heightened security and increased demand for services, the three levels of government are working together to do more with less. Join us to earn up to 14 CPE hours and hear from top-ranking government leaders who are facing these challenges head on.

Confirmed speakers from the federal government include Linda Springer, Controller, Office of Federal Financial Management, OMB; Karen Evans, Administrator of E-Government & Information Technology, OMB; Paul Posner, Managing Director, Federal Budget, Strategic Issues, U.S. General Accounting Office; and Andrew Mitchell, Acting Director, Office for Domestic Preparedness, Department of Homeland Security. Representing local government, Anthony Williams, Mayor of the District of Columbia will be a featured speaker, as will John Koskinen, Former D.C. Deputy Mayor & City Administrator, and Margret Kellems, DC Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice. From state government, speakers include Ralph Campbell, Jr., State Auditor, State of North Carolina; and Barbara Hafer, State Treasurer, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

For the complete conference agenda and for more information, go to *www.agacgfm.org/nlc.*

Contact Julie Cupp at *jcupp@agacgfm.org* with any questions. See you there!

The Fastest, Easiest Way to Meet your CPE Deadlines

Meet year-end CPE deadlines and fulfill your Yellow Book requirements with MicroMash CPE from the AGA website. More than 130 courses can be downloaded directly to your computer. MicroMash has added several new tax titles to the portal, and more are coming through the end of the year! Bookmark this page for quick access: *www.MicroMash.net/x/aga.*

Let's Name Names--for AGA Awardees

Whom do you know who's made significant contributions to the field of government financial management? You undoubtedly know someone who has for some time been making a substantial contribution, but who may as yet be an unsung hero or heroine. We'd like to hear from you about these individuals and their activities! The AGA-DC Chapter awards committee will soon meet with Chapter President Bob Reid to consider suggestions and nominations for Chapter and National AGA awards.

You don't have to prepare an entire awards application--we'll get to that later. Just contact one of these DC Chapter members with your ideas and suggestions for people who should be recognized. Contact Vanessa Hester at *vhester@fdic.gov* and/or *vhester@erols.com* (202.416.7274) or Eva Williams at *eva.williams@irs.gov* (301.492.5395).

A list of the awards and a very brief description follows. For more information on National awards, check the AGA website at *http://www.agacgfm.org/membership/awards/*. For more information on Chapter awards, talk with Eva or Vanessa.

AGA-DC Chapter Awards

(to be presented at the Chapter's April 21 Awards Dinner)

- **Distinguished Leadership Award** – for sustained distinguished leadership and dedication to excellence in government, extraordinary personal integrity and professionalism, and exceptional commitment to public service.
- **Achievement of the Year Award** – for developing, implementing and improving government financial management.
- **Distinguished Service Award** – for sustained outstanding contributions in advancing government accountability.
- **Einhorn/Gary Award** – for a superior service, over a sustained period of time, that enhanced the chapter and the AGA's prestige and stature in the financial management community.
- **James W. Saylor Award** – for outstanding service to the chapter.

National AGA Awards

(to be presented at the June 27-30 Professional Development Conference)

- **Einhorn/Gary Award** – for advancing Government accountability.
- **Robert W. King Award** – for improving AGA chapter stature.
- **Frank Greathouse Award** – for notable financial management contribution.
- **Achievement of the Year Award** – for developing, implementing and improving financial management.
- **Special Achievement Award** - to recognize a person age 35 or under for achievement in improving financial management.
- **Educator Award** – for education and training in financial management.
- **Chapter Service Award** – for providing the most to enhance chapter fulfillment.
- **Community Service Award** – for projects and services.
- **Cornelius E. Tierney Award** – for over 15 years of supporting financial management.

Feds Keep Pace with Private Sector in Customer Satisfaction

After a minor dip last year, the public's overall satisfaction with federal agencies is edging closer to an all-time high-reached two years ago, according to statistics gathered by the University of Michigan. The government received a score of 70.9 out of 100 possible points on the 2003 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), published by the University of Michigan Business School's National Quality Research Center. This beats federal agencies' 2002 score of 70.2, and puts the government just 0.4 points away from its record score of 71.3, reached in 2001. According to the survey, the most well-liked programs were the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, Social Security Administration, the U.S. Mint and National Library of Medicine, which operates a popular website, http://medlineplus.gov.The free application for federal student aid, available at www.fafsa.ed.gov, was also popular with respondents. The lowest score, 48 out of 100, was received by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's MapFinder website, but not far above that ranking was the IRS, which was given a 53 by individual filers and large and mid-size businesses.

—Amelia Gruber, Government Executive.
Read more at www.govexec.com/dailyfed/1203/121503a2.htm or read the scores on government agencies at www.theacsi.com/government/govt-03.html.

Federal Agencies Make Small Advances in IT Security

Federal agencies have made only small improvements in securing government networks and IT systems from hackers and terrorists. While the federal government received an overall grade of F last year, a House panel issued a new scorecard earlier this month, raising the grade to a D. U.S. Rep. Adam Putnam, (R-FL) complained that 19 of 24 agencies reviewed failed to complete an inventory of their mission-critical systems. "An agency can't ensure its systems are secure if it can't account for all of its mission-critical systems," he said. "Everything starts with the inventory, and this aspect must improve—and improve quickly." There were a few bright spots. The agency with the biggest gain—the National Science Foundation—improved to an A- from a D- last year. The highest-ranked agency, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, received an A, up from a C last year. Other agencies receiving top grades: the Social Security administration, to B+ from B-; and the U.S. Department of Labor, to B from C+. Agencies with high scores fully inventoried their critical IT assets, identified critical infrastructure and mission-critical systems, established strong incident identification and reporting procedures, tightened controls over contractors, and developed strong plans of action and milestones that serve as guides for finding and eliminating security weaknesses.

—Eric Chabrow, InformationWeek. Read more at www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=1660055.

Protecting Personal Privacy Still a Challenge

On the one-year anniversary of the E-Government Act, some federal agencies remain ill prepared to implement privacy provisions required by the law, analysts say. The law requires agencies to ensure that they adequately protect personal information submitted over the Internet or stored on computers. Agencies are "all over the map" on their ability to fully comply with privacy guidelines in the E-Government Act, said Ari Schwartz, associate director of the Center for Democracy and Technology, a Washington-based advocacy group. IT experts at some agencies seemed ahead of the game on privacy protections, he said, but others appeared to have done "no work whatsoever" to comply with the requirements in the E-Government Act. Still others were at least interested in "doing it right," but were confused by the law, Schwartz said.

—Amelia Gruber, Government Executive. Read more at www.govexec.com/dailyfed/1203/121703a1.htm

Targeting Gaps in Skills Can Help Agencies Plan Ahead

Each federal agency faces unique challenges in recruiting and retaining employees, and the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) has issued a guide to help agencies prepare for major recruiting efforts. Agencies should think about situations likely to crop up over the next 18 months, and should consider long-term challenges separately, GAO recommends. The guide, "Key Principles for Effective Strategic Workforce Planning," (GAO-04-39) is based on interviews with federal managers and officials at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The guide also gathers information from academic studies and experts at think tanks. Agencies should use targeted recruiting programs to fill skills gaps, GAO recommends. The U.S. Department of Labor, looking to hire more managers with business degrees, launched a fellows program for people with MBA degrees. Labor is also courting such candidates by offering recruitment bonuses and student loan repayments. Such work force planning techniques will not work unless agencies involve help multiple layers of managers in implementation, the GAO guide cautions.

— Amelia Gruber, Government Executive. Read more at www.govexec.com/dailyfed/1203/121503a1.htm.

OMB Guides Agencies on Top Rating on Competitive Sourcing

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has given agencies more guidance on how to "get to green" on the competitive sourcing initiative of the President's Management Agenda. Agencies are being asked to craft plans for letting contractors bid on federal jobs from now through 2008. OMB Deputy Director for Management Clay Johnson said in a memorandum last month that OMB would evaluate plans based on how well they support an agency's mission. "OMB will assess a plan's effectiveness in a manner that accounts for the agency's unique mission and work force needs as well as the agency's demonstrated ability to conduct reviews and competitions in a reasonable and responsible banner."

—Jason Peckenpaugh, Government Executive. Read more at www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0104/010604p1.htm

Treasury's Audit Process Sets Example for Other Agencies

When then-Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill told his staff to close the books on fiscal year 2002 in 45 days, many were skeptical. Up to that point, the audit of the annual consolidated financial statements was considered "on time" if it was completed five months after the end of the fiscal year. The financial management team was asked not only do their year-end work three times faster than before, but also to close the books each month in just three days, rather than the usual 20. William H. Pugh, a member of AGA's Washington, D.C. Chapter, would be one of the people responsible for meeting O'Neill's goal. What did he and his colleagues think of the idea? "My honest answer to that is we did not reject the notion, but we insisted that there be a very detailed, specific timeline and a commitment by all parties involved," said Pugh, Treasury's deputy assistant inspector general for financial audits. "Only when we could see a viable plan on getting from here to there did we sign off on it."

—Christina Camara, AGA. Read more at www.agacgfm.org/publications/agatoday/articles/011204.aspx

DFAS Announces Fourth Consecutive Clean Audit

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has announced that it has earned its fourth consecutive "unqualified opinion" from outside auditors, according to its recently released stakeholders' report for fiscal year 2003. The clean opinion from AGA Corporate Partner Urbach Kahn & Werlin LLP is the highest mark available. The DFAS FY 2003 Stakeholders' Report, along with the agency's audited financial statement, is available at www.dfas.mil/about/ar_index.htm. DFAS is the world's largest finance and accounting operation. Some of its fiscal year 2003 accomplishments include disbursing $416 billion, recording 121 million accounting transactions, and paying 5.9 million military, civilians, retirees and annuitants. DFAS also improved its myPay system, which allows customers control of their pay account information online. "DFAS' success in 2003 prepares the ground for even better service to our customer and greater value for the American taxpayer in 2004," said Patrick T. Shine, acting director of DFAS.

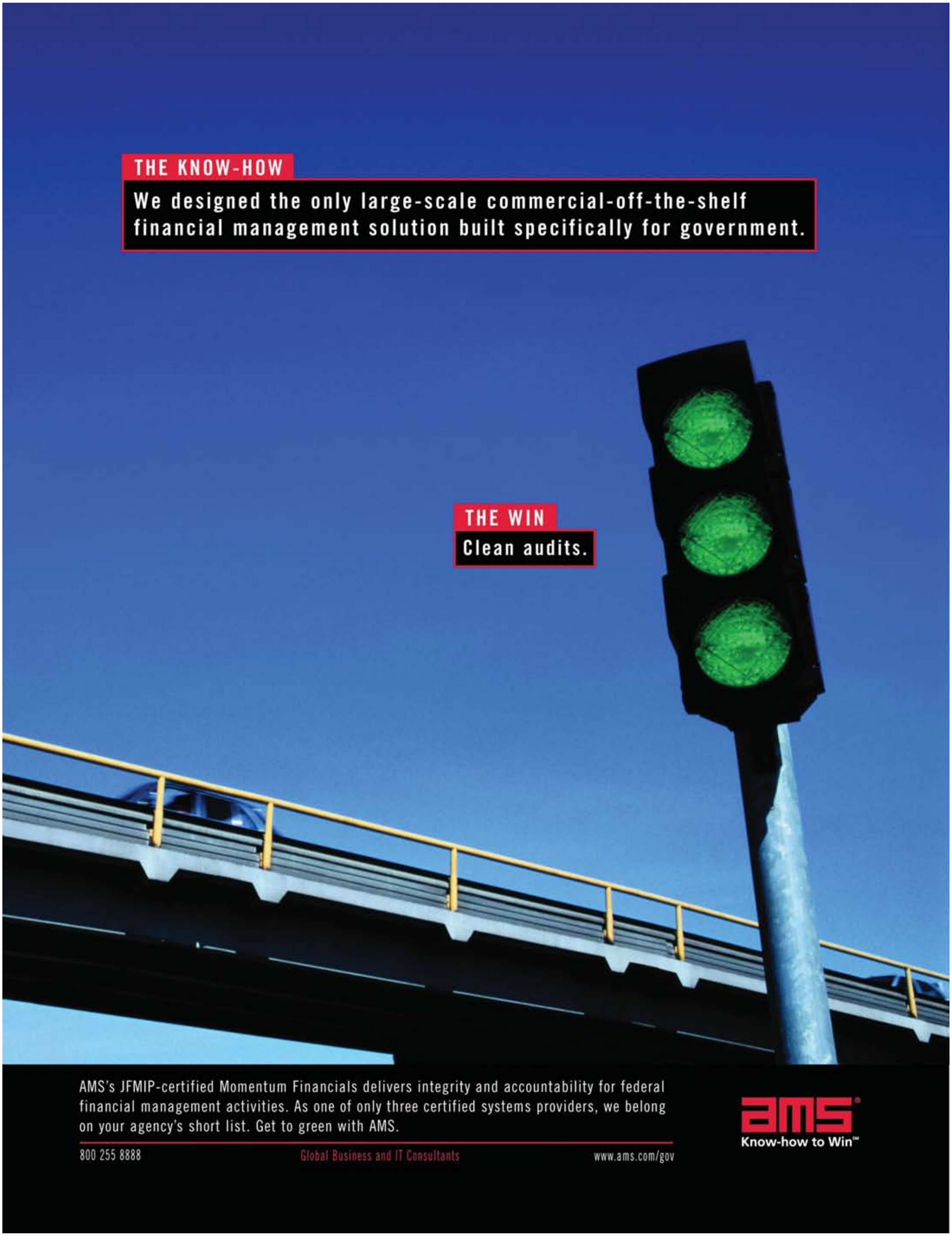
Private Sector-Government Pay Gap Averages 17.5 Percent

According to a recent report by the President's Pay Agent, as of March 2003 the pay gap between private sector and federal general schedule pay—a gap that the GS locality pay system was to have virtually closed by now—averaged 17.48 percent. That included a range of from 28.31 percent in the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose locality to 13.36 percent in the catchall "rest of U.S." locality that covers areas outside metropolitan statistical zones. Only 44 percent of the "target" disparity has been closed on average. The numbers don't include the effect of 2004 raises. The group estimated that closing the gaps would cost an additional $8 billion over the current baseline of spending on federal pay. The price tag is a main reason why the federal pay law has not been implemented as originally designed, although members of both parties also have questioned the methods used to compute the gap.

—FedWeek. Read more at www.fedweek.com

GASB Approves Technical Plan for First Quarter of 2004

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has approved its technical plan for the first four months of 2004 at its January teleconference. Major changes to the plan include adding a Preliminary Views document to the due process associated with the pollution remediation obligations project, adding a project on securitizations and other transfers of future revenue streams, and moving a concepts project on defining financial statement elements (for example, assets and liabilities) from the research agenda to the current agenda. An overview of the GASB's current technical agenda can be found at its website *(www.gasb.org)* under "Technical Issues."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